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WICCA ADVANCED: A SECOND YEAR WITHIN THE CRAFT



✧ BY PINO LONGCHILD ✧

Wicca Advanced:
A Second Year within
the Craft
by
Pino Longchild

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Acknowledgements

A huge debt of gratitude goes to Deirdre Hebert who extremely generously volunteered to read and edit the entire manuscript. I don't know what I would have done without her keen eye for all manner of grammatical corrections, the changes she made to cumbersome phrases, her pointing out of factual errors and her suggestions on how to make some of the sections clearer.

Cassandra Carmentisis, Asphodel (aka Beith), the moderator and mentor teams (both past and present) on the www.magickaschool.com Forum are deserving of mention as well, for without their sterling work I would not have had the time to devote to writing that I have needed. They have all helped create a very successful On-line community and I am very grateful for all they have done.

I would also like to acknowledge those students at Magicka School who have written to me from time to time, pointing out inconsistencies and things that were vague in the On-line course of *Wicca Advanced*.

Finally, great thanks are also due to my wife, Chantal Santos, with whom I discussed many of the ideas within the book.

Please Note: All dates are given using the convention CE (Common Era, equivalent to *Anno Domini* or AD) and BCE (Before Common Era, equivalent to Before Christ or BC).

Preface

It is hoped that *Wicca Advanced* will provide students with the means to further their Wiccan education in a deep and meaningful way. *Wicca Revealed* gave its readers the basic Wiccan framework of living, the Esbats and Sabbats and the fundamentals of some of the magical arts. *Wicca Advanced* builds on this and provides the means to explore in detail a variety of important skills practiced by many Witches.

The work has a strong emphasis on service to others. Although such things as divination, Astrology, herbalism and healing crafts can be practiced alone, and for the benefit of the individual, they are also powerful tools that can achieve the betterment of a community, be that the community of a family or a village or a town.

Wicca Advanced closely follows the On-line course of the same name and it has been made available in the hope that it will provide a useful complimentary resource to the On-line offerings. No longer will students have to resort to printing off the web pages and re-format them in a word-processor. The book's organisation also means that students will be easily able to revisit areas that they wish to look at again.

The original twelve lesson structure has been kept throughout. Most lessons contain a main topic as well as a research project and exercises. Footnotes can be found at the end of each chapter, as can any appendices. For reasons of production costs, the course exams have been omitted.

Pino Longchild

December 3rd, 2007

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Use of this Book

Wicca Advanced is laid out in twelve lessons or chapters. Each chapter is intended to provide the basis for one month of study and activity so that the entire course takes twelve months to complete. To this end, the reader will find in each lesson an initial study section followed by a research project and exercises. Readers of this book will find much follow up material and support at www.magickaschool.com.

Chapter One: Divination

Divination

“Divination...is the most sensitive, difficult and perilous branch of Magick.”

“The abuse of divination has been responsible, more than any other cause, for the discredit into which the whole subject of Magick had fallen”.

Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Thoth*, p. 253.

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will learn about the most popular methods of divination. Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete. There are also two lesson related exercises for you to work on. Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge. Finally, there is a blessing.

Divination

In this lesson I will consider the point of divination, examine how it works, consider some general methods of approach and look at some of the better known divinatory practices. First though, let's seek to define the term.

Divination comes from the Latin word *divinatio* which means the power of foreseeing. However, it is not an easy thing to characterise and has many definitions. Aleister Crowley described it as reducing to the use of two questions: “Of what are things composed?” and, “How shall we combine them to our greater advantage?” [1]. The Farrar's conceived of divination as being “clairvoyance using tools” where it “is the art and science of being aware of facts, objects or situations by psychic means when they are not available to ordinary awareness” [2]. For famous Golden Dawn Magicians, the Ciceros, it is “the art of uncovering the divine meaning behind chance events” [3]. And for Starhawk “all divinatory techniques work essentially to focus awareness and engage in the heightened intuition and perception that are possible in trance. Today these techniques are not used for “fortune telling” but as methods of spiritual and psychological counselling” [4]. If we were to draw these together we can understand that divination allows us to take an overview of a situation or a thing, to a degree that is not normally possible, and, using this knowledge as a basis, it allows the diviner to see a future progression. This information is then offered to the seeker as analysis and advice.

The Point of Divination

It is commonly argued that there is no point in divining the future as knowing whether good things will happen spoils their surprise and foreknowledge of bad

events creates worry. However, many of us plan for the future and use the range of available resources to inform our decisions. Put into this context, divination provides yet another tool that can aid us in how best to deploy our assets and can be seen to have validity.

How Divination Works

There are several common notions about how divination functions. In this section some of the better-known viewpoints are considered.

The Akashic Records and Synchronicity

Generally, occultists believe that there is a repository of all human experiences throughout past ages. These are known as the Akashic records and are similar to what C. G. Jung termed the “collective unconscious”. For Jung this existed below the level of our personal unconscious and was populated by the experiences of life embedded throughout human history. This stratum of consciousness is likely common to many mammals and has been shown by scientists to exist in cats. Appalling as it will seem to many, cats reared in a laboratory had the part of their brain removed that prevents them from acting out dreams. These cats had never left the windowless room that they had been born in and had never seen any other living creature. However, the actions that they carried out in their sleep were identical to cats that hunt birds in the outside world. This proved that the cats had memories and patterns of behaviour that were inherited. However, these ways of being existed below the level of the cats’ waking consciousness [5].

One of the lessons of occult philosophy is that ultimately all existence is one. This is echoed in psychology, where it is believed that at a deep level humans are connected by a great sea of collective memories, containing all human knowledge and all human behaviour. On a conscious level we are individuals, but, in the unconscious, we are at some level all joined.

Witches access the Akashic records in a number of ways, most commonly through meditative trance or through the use of intermediary forces such as one’s Holy Guardian Angel or other spiritual guides (these are discussed in detail in later chapters). This is the reason why many who practice divination will say a prayer or perform a short magical technique before they start calling on divine guidance. There are two types of divinatory tools that allow access to the Akashic records; those that help to induce a state of trance, and those that use a combination of objects that can be examined. For example, crystal balls and black mirrors are used to aid emptying the mind and allow it to develop a light trance, whereas Tarot cards, runes and yarrow sticks are obviously divination tools that involve the use of permutations. Sometimes both types of approach are used together; for example, some Tarot readers induce a trance state before reading the cards.

How divinatory tools function with regard to the Akashic records is perhaps best explained by the theories of Jung. According to his ideas, some symbols

manifested themselves in waking conscious life in the form of a synchronicitous event. For example, Jung felt that one happening of this kind might be a clock stopping at the point that someone died. He perceived this kind of event to be more than just mere coincidence. Could it be then that when the diviner casts their cards, or stones, or yarrow sticks, that the way they fall is more than just a random happening? Perhaps the patterns they fall into, and the interpretation they are given, are synchronicitous events with meaning and import, allowing the diviner to connect to the collective unconscious or Akashic records. The diviner then uses his or her intuition to decide what the future will hold, based on their understanding of all past and present events pertaining to the matter in hand.

A common criticism of divinatory practice based on combinations of objects is that it is extremely unlikely that the same pattern that the diviner has cast will appear twice over the same issue. But those who make this point have not understood the nature of synchronicity - it is of the moment, and when the moment has changed the circumstances have changed. The pattern of the objects, and the reading that is generated from them, will be different.

Precognition

There is another way that divination may be able to work and that is based on actually seeing the future.

That this may be possible is indicated by scientific research into precognition, which can be defined as seeing that an event is going to happen. Around the world there are a number of researchers looking into the nature of consciousness. Scientists, including Dean Radin of the Boundary Institute, Los Altos, California, have been showing individuals a series of random pictures, the majority of which are pleasant or neutral scenes, interspersed with a few horrific or erotic photos. The viewers are shown the images one by one and their brainwaves constantly monitored throughout the experiment. What the results consistently show is that an individual's brainwaves and sweat patterns change just before the horrific or erotic photos are shown. Somehow the brain knows something unusual is about to happen before it takes place [6]. This is but one of many experiments that lead to the conclusion that at some level all of us have precognition. It is important to note that these manifestations of precognition are below the threshold of consciousness. That is, the individual is not consciously aware that there have been changes in their physiology. Despite this, the research does not rule out the possibility that it may be possible for individuals to consciously experience future events and recognises, in fact, that there are numerous anecdotal reports in all cultures and throughout all times that precognition occurs.

However, there are two ways of regarding the future: one is to see that it has a fixed existence; the other is to see that there are an infinite range of possible futures that may or may not take place.

There are a number of scientists who believe that the future already exists and that there is only one possible future. Some seek to base these assertions on

Einsteinian Physics [7]. One of the conclusions that Einstein's calculations leads to is that all of our futures already exist, as do our pasts. Our consciousness merely floats along a line that is already drawn, experiencing events that have already happened as if for the first time. Everything is cut and dried and free will is an illusion, created by the limitations of our mind and the way it processes information. This view is based on the logic of the Space-Time Continuum. Just as an object exists away from us, so does our future, and we merely step into it, despite all our ideas to the contrary that we have control over what we do. If this is true, and if one had the right skills to access this information, then it would be possible to accurately tell someone their past and their future.

Another scientific view of the future is probabilistic, founded on the idea that there are a range of future outcomes [8]. This is based on the so-called "Copenhagen Interpretation" of Quantum Theory. According to this interpretation, an unobserved quantum system remains in an uncertain state of many different possibilities. Observation causes "collapse" into a definite condition, which is chosen at random from among the possibilities provided. In effect, consciousness causes patterns to reduce from uncertain states into definite states. This has led some to conclude that there are an infinite variety of possible future outcomes depending on our choices. In this view of the future free will exists as we choose which possible future to create. Perhaps then, one may have genuine precognition of a possible future event, which may or may not take place, depending on choices made [9].

Either of these scientific views allows for the possibility of precognition and for divination; with regard to the first view, the future is fixed and knowable; with the second a range of possible futures can be viewed. It may be then that diviners who claim they are seeing the future really are able to utilise their methods to do just that. However, they are not compatible, one or the other must be wrong; either the future is fixed or either it is probabilistic.

Fixed Patterns and Combinations

Another way of explaining how divination works is that certain patterns and combinations of objects have been observed over time to indicate that there is the potential for certain events, or that such events are extremely likely. This argument is of particular importance to Astrology (considered by itself in other chapters) and Palmistry, although it can be also be used to partly explain other forms of divination as well. In Astrology combinations of planets, stars and constellations are compared to previous patterns; judgements are then made as to their meaning. Similarly, in Palmistry, the reader knows already that certain features generally mean certain things and indicate the likelihood of them happening. With both these methods no reference is made to the Akashic records, and they also allow for free will as the combinations observed reveal only tendencies (some more likely than others) which may, or may not, come to pass.

Proponents of this style of divination talk of the similarity between its methods and those of science. Like weather forecasters and the financial industry, past trends and patterns are analysed on which to base predictions of future events. Some may object that divination based on these methods is a false art, saying that the fundamental difference between these two examples is that the quality of information upon which they base their predictions is more worthy, and furthermore that the success of their predictive technologies can be verified scientifically. Yet it is a common anecdote in the financial world that buying shares based on a blindfolded individual throwing a dart into a list of companies is just as successful over time as the biggest and brightest of investment companies buying shares based on their “scientific” predictions.

Summary

It can be seen that there are four possible foundations for how divination functions:

- An overview of the past and present may be used to predict the future.
- The future is already written and viewing it is possible.
- Knowledge of the future may be accomplished by viewing one or more of a limitless number of possibilities.
- Past data about combinations of objects may be used to extrapolate a likely course of events.

All but the second approach allow for free will; for proponents of this viewpoint the future is fixed and because of this would have to be completely knowable to those that can access it. Perhaps, tellingly, a criticism that can be levelled against this declaration is that if this is the case how can a diviner, who claims to base their practice on this assertion, ever be wrong?

Approaches to Divination

Before we look at the variety of divinatory tools let us first examine the general style that different diviners use. Basically they fall into two categories; those that ask their clients, or querents, what they have come for, and those that tell their clients why they have come. This difference in approaches can be hotly debated as one accuses the other of not being correct. I will not enter into polemics here but will give you the information you need to decide for yourself. The issues basically boil down to two points:

1. Some argue that if a diviner doesn't ask why a client has come then obviously the divination breaks down if they are not correct in their interpretation and are unable to give the exact nature of the enquiry, or at least discuss it in general terms.

2. On the other hand, to many people, asking the client the nature of their enquiry seems unauthentic and smacks of charlatanism.

However, underpinning both these points of view are wider methodologies:

When those that ask the querent of the nature of their enquiry are successful then an issue is discussed interactively. The diviner plays the role of facilitator providing a Forum for the client to discuss their issue and helps them work through a future solution of their own based on how the cards are interpreted. This method requires the diviner to have a great deal of experience of life, an ability to relate to others, intuition, an ability to tailor advice to an individual's needs, and the skill to facilitate a client's working through an issue. The best diviners in this method have these skills innately, although they can all be learnt over time. The draw back with this method might be that the diviner spends their time asking leading questions to ply information from the client, and, having done this, is then unable to give any beneficial lead as to how an issue may be resolved. The client then leaves feeling disillusioned, cheated, and with the feeling that their issue hasn't been dealt with successfully.

In the second instance, when a diviner literally tells of what they see, the client gains confidence in the diviner's skill at being able to tell what the issue is, as well as its details and circumstances, and feels an assuredness in the predictions of the future developments of the matter. This method relies on the diviner having a high level of intuitive or psychic ability. In the past, noted diviners used to say that this could not be learnt; however, many in the psychic fraternity now believe that all of us are psychic to some extent and that these abilities can be developed and heightened. The drawback of this method can be that the querent does not have an interactive experience; they are not asked for information or an opportunity to discuss their feelings. They have participated passively, listened to what the seer says and then left. Although the client may have been enormously impressed with what they regard as the diviner's psychic ability they have not worked through an issue for themselves. In some circumstances this can mean that they disassociate from the issue and rely too greatly on others to sort their life out.

Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages for the reader and the querent, although, as we have seen, both can be made to work and have validity. At the end of the day the diviner must decide for themselves which method they have the skill for, if indeed they have the skills at all. There will be people who are unable to use either approach successfully. On the other hand, the finest readers have both sets of abilities and often combine approaches.

Various Divinatory Practices

In this section of the lesson we will now turn our attention to some of the more well known methods of divination.

The Tarot

For Wiccans the Tarot is perhaps the most widely used of divinatory tools. The Tarot can be defined as a set of seventy-eight cards of an ancient provenance. Twenty-two of these are trump cards and are known as the Major Arcana. Each of these has a title such as The Fool, The Magician, The High Priestess, The Moon, The Sun and The World etc. There are also fifty-six other cards that make up what is referred to as the Minor Arcana. These are divided into four suits, most commonly as Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles. Each suit has numbered cards from two to ten, they also have an Ace and four court cards generally (but not always) referred to as King, Queen, Knight and Page.

Tarot cards can easily be obtained from major book sellers and occult specialist shops; both On-line and in the real world. In some quarters there used to be a notion that Tarot cards should not be bought and that one should wait to receive them as a gift. Romantic as this notion may seem, in reality it makes no difference to the card's effectiveness whether you bought them on sale from Amazon.com, or received them as a gift from a great aunt who has practiced divination for half a century. It is what you do with them that counts.

Broadly speaking the Tarot has two uses; it is a spiritual and self help tool, and it is a method of divination. However, not every Tarot is designed to have a deep range of uses. Many are little more than a showcase for an artist's skills, although admittedly lovely to look at.

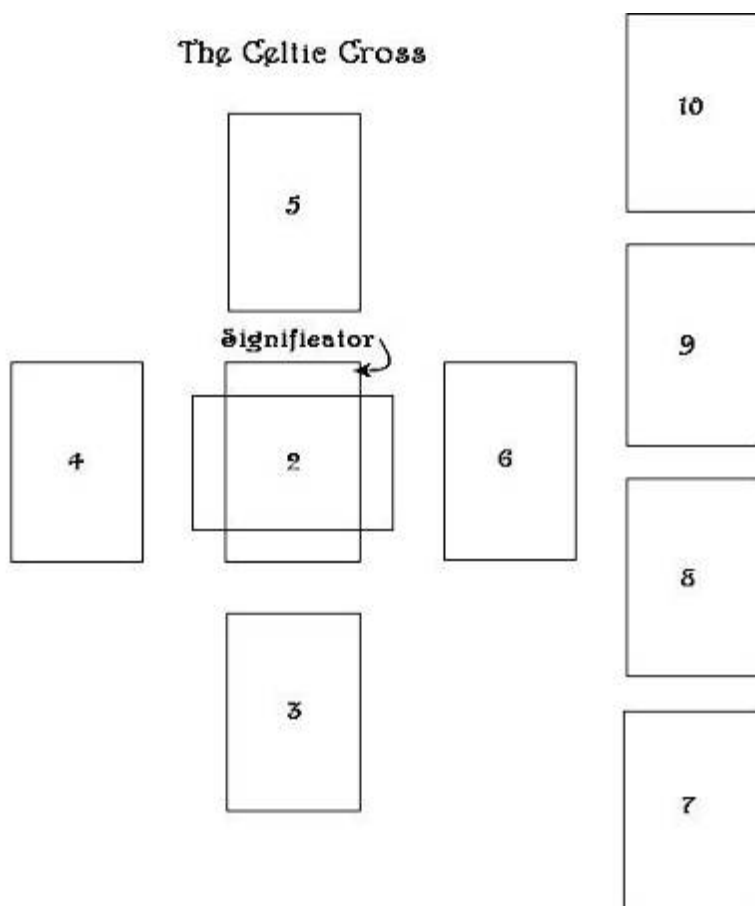
For a Tarot to be effective it must have a system of symbols, but symbols in the Jungian sense of the word. Jung defined a symbol as "a term, a name or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning...it has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the scope of reason" [10]. Symbols that can be defined as this therefore have mind enhancing powers that expand the range of its activity. Tarots that have such symbolic qualities include the Rider-Waite Tarot, the Tarot of Marseilles and Robert Wang's Tarot of the Golden Dawn. There are, of course, others of value too, but if one of these is chosen it will make an ideal place to start.

Tarot symbolism is complex and for many presents significant initial difficulties. These can be overcome by working with the cards through meditation or divination, as well as studying their imagery over a period of time. Little by little they will reveal the meaning that they have for you. Quite literally the Tarot can be seen as a symbolic representation of everything in existence, representing the forces of life and how they interact in various ways. Because of this it is able to widen the individual's view of the world and show them their place within it.

There are a variety of approaches to using the Tarot for divination and an infinite amount of divinatory spreads to use. At first, beginners are advised to use the well known Celtic Cross spread made popular by A.E. Waite, one of the

creators of the Rider-Waite Tarot (the other being the artist Pamela Colman Smith):

The Significance of the Card Positions



1. The Significator-This card shows the general atmosphere and influences that surround the question. Some readers choose this card to represent their client; others just deal the card out as it comes.
2. This card is laid across the Significator and is always read as if it is the right way up. This card represents the specific forces of the moment that affect the issue be they opposing or otherwise.
3. This is the basis of the matter. These are the things that have happened in the more distant past.
4. This is what is behind. These are the things that have happened in the immediate past.

5. This is the crown of the matter. This card shows things that may be coming in the future.
6. This is in front. This card shows the immediate next turn of events.
7. These are the fears. This card shows the individual's fears about a matter.
8. Environmental factors. This card represents the influences of family, friends or colleagues.
9. Hopes. This is what the individual hopes to be the outcome.
10. Final outcome. This card tells of what the end of the matter will be.

Most decks of Tarot come with a little booklet that explains the divinatory meanings of the cards. These should be learnt; it is most important though that a card reader builds up their own understanding of the cards based on the meanings of its symbols and how it appears in divinatory spreads. This is something that takes time and to aid development it is a good idea to start a notebook where each card has a page devoted to it. Over time patterns of use and meaning will emerge that will provide the diviner with the knowledge they need for an in-depth Tarot practice.

Palmistry

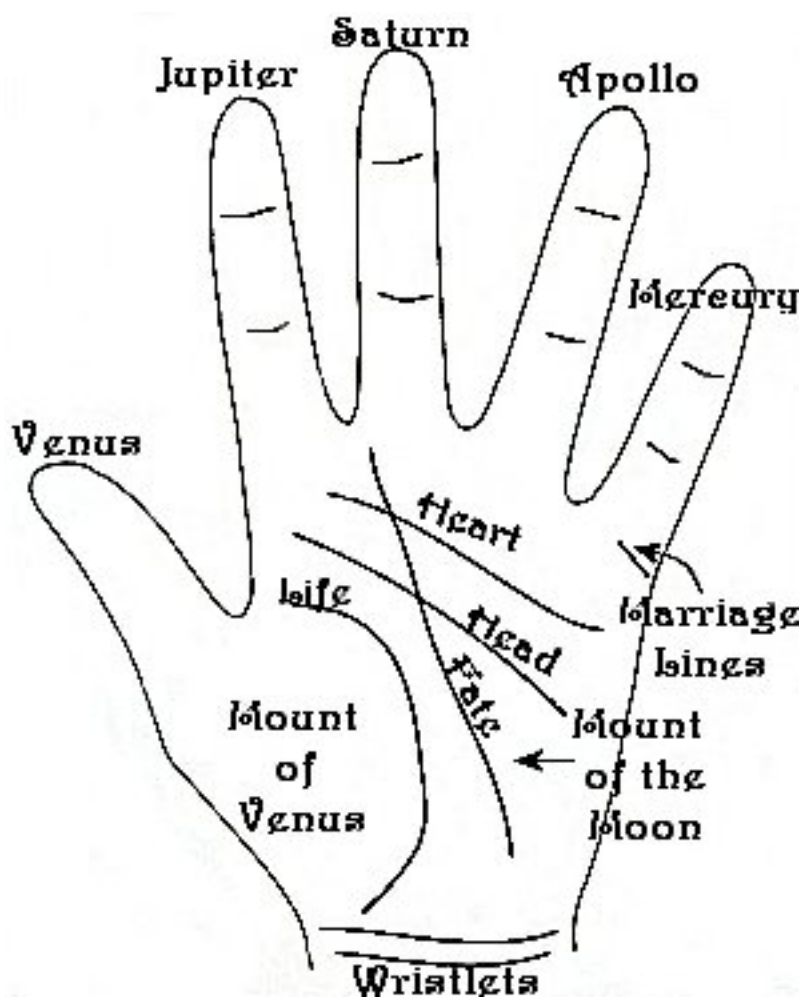
Palmistry is commonly known as the skill of divining the future based on an individual's palms, although many readers will look at the whole hand.

It is sometimes also referred to as hand analysis or Cheiromancy (or Chiromancy) the latter term taking its name from the Greek words for hand (*cheir*) and divination (*manteia*). Palmistry has been practiced all over the world throughout recorded history, and is therefore deeply rooted within the human psyche. Its history is complicated, although it is often traced back through nineteenth century occultists to gypsy fortune tellers, and down to Hindu mystics and Ancient China. Certainly there are a number of ancient references to finding meaning in the hands contained within the Bible [11]. It was known to the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Hebrews, and was recognised by such philosophers as Plato and Aristotle [12].

Different cheiromancists practice the art slightly differently. Some look at both hands, whilst others opt just for either the right or left, depending on which is used most. Some believe that the dominant hand represents what an individual has done with their life, while the less dominant hand indicates a person's potential at birth and carries past-life or karmic information as well as hereditary traits. However, all practitioners attempt to evaluate a person's character and future by reading their palm. Different lines and mounts are examined for their relative sizes, qualities and intersections, and many readers will also look closely at characteristics of the fingers, fingernails, fingerprints, palmar skin patterns, skin texture, colour and the overall shape of the hand. These are then interpreted as to their meaning for the individual.

Areas of the palm, as well as each finger, are associated with a planet known to classical antiquity. It is important to note that for classical civilisation the planets were synonymous with goddesses and gods. The characteristics of each area of the palm, or finger, therefore corresponded to those of a deity. So, for example, the ring finger (second finger in from the small finger) is linked to the Sun, or the god Apollo, who was famed for his beauty and skill at music; the characteristics of the finger are therefore tied to art, music, aesthetics, fame, and harmony. In effect the planets/deities are short hand for remembering the meanings of different features.

The four most significant lines on the palm are those of the individual's Life, the Heart, the Head and Fate as in the diagram below.



Beginning at its topmost point the Life Line can be divided into three more or less equal sections, each roughly indicating the course of twenty five years. It broadly denotes the health and richness of life that an individual will experience. A

deep clear Life Line running right round the thumb will therefore show a full life, with strength and vitality, whereas an individual, who has a Life Line that is broken, in chains or short, shows the possibility of poor health and will need to be counselled to take special care. Determining how long an individual will live can be done in conjunction with the wristlets. Each full line indicates between twenty and twenty five years of life.

The Heart Line represents matters of the heart and by its depth and its length indicates the strength of emotions and intuitive capabilities that an individual is likely to have. It also shows various aspects of cardiac health. Someone who has a deep and long heart line will feel both the good and bad aspects of their life intensely. They will also have a strong heart but must take care not to be too extreme in their emotions, as they could have a detrimental affect on their well being. A person with a short, broken or faint heart line will be less intense in their feelings. The danger here is one of detachment and lack of engagement in life.

The Head Line shows intellectual capability; the more profound and longer the line, the more able the individual. A sloping line indicates a keen intelligence, but the inability to use it for positive constructive purposes. On the rare occasion when Head and Heart Lines are combined the individual is especially powerful and formidable and will achieve highly in their chosen field.

The Fate Line is not always present in an individual, and, even when it is, can be quite faint. It indicates the range of opportunities that an individual will have in their life. Whether or not good use of these is made is a different matter and will be indicated in the general layout of the palm.

It should be noted that palmistry is a far more complicated and intricate subject than this brief introduction has allowed. It should also be made clear that definite pronouncements should be avoided on the basis of a palm reading. It merely offers tendencies which can be useful to feed back to an individual as they provide information that can help in planning their life.

Skrying

Another favourite of Witches is the method of divination known as skrying (also spelt as scrying and pronounced “scrying” and not “skreeing”). Skrying uses an object that allows the diviner to focus their attention and empty their head of distracting thoughts. In effect it helps create a form of trance which, when induced, allows the diviner to connect with the Akashic records and predict the future. Some Witches would state that ideally a clear, colourless crystal ball should be used for this purpose. However, genuine clear crystal balls are very expensive and rare. Crystal is a natural substance and usually it is full of “flaws” or occlusions. Many Witches are quite happy to use either an “imperfect” crystal ball or a crystal substitute such as glass. Others feel that a black obsidian ball can be just as effective. As with everything in Wicca there are no hard and fast rules and the individual must decide for themselves what seems right.

Further, some Witches don't use a crystal ball or one of its variants at all and opt instead for a black mirror. Like many things that are used in the occult world this item has been misrepresented as a Satanist's tool. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Just like the crystal ball, the black mirror provides a basis for trance.

Such an object can be easily made, although there are many occult shops that sell the item. The shape and size of the mirror, as well as type of frame, will be a personal choice although it should be born in mind that these factors should be dictated by how you intend to use it. Obviously a small mirror is best if you intend to hold it in your hands and some types of frames can be distracting. To make a black mirror you need a piece of glass cut in the shape that you desire, a frame that fits and black paint. Either spray paint or black gloss will work well. Simply paint one side of the glass, leave to dry and apply one or two more coats until no light is able to shine through.

When and how a black mirror or crystal ball is used differs from practitioner to practitioner. Some prefer to use them in an ecstatic state of heightened magical awareness, whilst others prefer to use meditation to calm the mind as far as possible. Either method works as the idea is to empty the mind of its normal preoccupations to allow contact with the Akashic records.

Typically the diviner will notice milky clouds appearing in the glass or crystal and that either these clear or that out of them images appear. Not everyone is the same though, and some diviners using this method talk of various lights appearing. Still others say that they see nothing in the object at all, but that the images appear in their minds.

Runes

Some Witches opt to use runes. Briefly described these are letter characters of the ancient alphabets used by Germanic peoples. Runic inscriptions are to be found all over Western Europe, but particularly in England and Scandinavia, where they have been used on stone monuments, metal spear points and amulets. Their first use seems to be around the first or second century A.D. Their origins are obscure and shrouded in the mists of time. In Norse mythology, their invention is attributed to Odin who received the runes through his self-sacrifice. This myth was added to in 1555 when the exiled Swedish archbishop, Olaus Magnus, recorded a tradition that the mortal, Kettil Runske, had stolen three rune staffs from Odin and learnt the runes and their magic [13].

The earliest runic inscriptions were short and simple markings on objects that gave the name of the craftsman or the artefact's owner. It is also possible that early runes had magical purposes and were used as charms or for divination. The name "rune" can be taken to mean "a mark of mysterious or magical significance" [14], which perhaps indicates that knowledge of the runes could be considered esoteric or privileged. However, there are no historical sources that show conclusively how they would have been used. Today, perhaps spurred by their

ancient appeal and the fact they have been used widely in art and literature (most notably in Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings*), they have been moulded into an entire system of divination based on the runes' reconstructed names and associated meanings. There are now a number of well known works on the subject that expound their uses for divination. Some authors and practitioners claim that it is necessary and vital to make one's own set of runes, and provide instructions on how these can be made. Whereas others make no such assertions and include a set of runes along with their book on the subject.

Rune stones are cast usually onto a cloth on the ground and from here the patterns they fall into are interpreted according to the divinatory system being used.

Pendulums

Pendulums are also a popular divinatory tool. They take the form of an object suspended by a cord or chain that is held by a practitioner in their hand. Depending on which way the pendulum swings an affirmative or negative answer may be given to a question. A pendulum can also be used held over an object where again which way it swings can be interpreted to have importance. What a pendulum is made from depends on the tastes of the practitioner, although perhaps most common is a crystal suspended on a silver chain. There are two schools of thought about how divination using this method functions. One takes the view that imperceptible hand movements cause the pendulum to swing, but that the way the hand moves is guided by a higher intuitive faculty in the practitioner's mind. Others seek to explain the pendulums swing as having nothing to do with the person who holds it and talk instead of mysterious forces that cause it to move.

Tea Leaves and Molten Wax

The use of divinatory tool such as tea leaves and the way molten wax reforms in water, as well as their variants, can be explained in two ways. The first is that these methods provide a focal point through which to distance oneself from the everyday world and its distractions. By gazing at their random formations the mind can be freed and placed in a mild state of trance. An illogical base is created from where the psyche can progress beyond the scope of reason and connect to the unconscious. And, as we have seen, in the unconscious dwells the records of human experience which can serve as a basis to predict the future. The second way that it can be used is to meditate on the apparent shapes that become visible in the leaves or the wax. These are seen as symbols that rise out of the unconscious and have meaning linked to the issue being considered. Some diviners work from a set list of such symbols and their interpretations, whilst others take a more fluid approach where the symbols that appear, and their meanings, are different at different times.

The *I Ching*

The last divinatory tool that this chapter will consider is the ancient system of *I Ching*. This has had some very high profile exponents in the worlds of psychology and magic, as both C. G. Jung and Aleister Crowley were experts. Known in English as the *Book of Changes*, the *I Ching* is an ancient Chinese book. Its origins are obscure; legend tells that the mythical god-emperor Fuxi (alive around 2400 BCE.) discovered the eight trigrams on the back of a sacred tortoise. The book can be used for divination but is also a moral, philosophical, and cosmological text. In Ancient China the future was foretold by burning holes in bones or tortoise shells, and examining the resulting cracks. This perhaps provided the inspiration of the lines of the *I Ching*. The work is founded on sixty four symbolic hexagrams, each made of a pair of trigrams which consist of three parallel lines. Solid lines represent the yang, or active principle, whilst broken lines show the yin, or passive principle. Each of these eight basic trigrams are named after a natural phenomenon. The full sixty four hexagrams use all the possible combinations of the six lines.

Commonly, nowadays, the book is consulted by the process of dividing up and counting off fifty stalks of the yarrow plant, or by tossing coins. The numbers that this gives determines the lines for the resulting hexagram. They determine whether each line is yin or yang, and whether it is “still” or “moving” and about to morph into its opposite. Therefore the hexagrams are seen as constantly changing into each other, echoing the cyclical nature of the Universe. The symbolic importance of each hexagram is written in cryptic poetic passages that must be interpreted.

Care Issues

Most Witches would agree that divinatory tools are best treated with respect, not because they have any huge value within themselves -a Tarot deck is, after all, a pack of cards and the *I Ching* a collection of sticks -but because the art of divination itself should be treated seriously. If you think of the definition given at the start of the lesson, you will remember that divination can be regarded as finding the divine structure behind things. It is a spiritual vocation and in some very real ways connects the individual to the great repository of all human knowledge as well as heavenly forces. By treating these tools with respect Witches are paying homage to these higher forces. Some Wiccans therefore wrap their tools in silk or velvet, or keep them in specially designated boxes or bags. Some even sleep with their chosen tool under their pillow to create a bond that heightens the sense that it is a special object with a special purpose. Others lay their tools out periodically to bathe in the light of the Moon to associate them with the powers that the Moon symbolises.

All divinatory apparatus should be properly consecrated before use. As explored in *Wicca Revealed* consecration is important. It provides a way of psychically cleansing the object as well as serving to align the user, the tool, and the higher forces that will be drawn upon during its use.

Research Project

Many of the divinatory methods written about in the lesson are deserving of many chapters or an entire book. For reasons of space it just hasn't been possible to present them exhaustively. However, there is enough material to give a range of the divinatory options that you can now explore for yourself.

After reading this chapter why not begin that exploration? Choose a divinatory method that you would like to know more about and carry out some research. There are a number of starting points given in the reading list at the end of the book, and if you can't access those then look up your chosen method on the Internet. Remember though to be discriminating in your choice of sources, plenty of nonsense has been written about divination, perhaps more so than any other area of the occult. Judge for yourself what seems right and what you are prepared to believe.

If you already know a divinatory system well then you have two things you can do; either find out more about it or take a look at something that you might not have considered before. If you don't fancy either of these options, then how about considering how the expertise you already have can best be shared with others?

As always, for those of you who want to, you can post your views and findings onto the www.magickaschool.com Forum and debate with other students.

Exercises

The exercises in this book build upon those found in *Wicca Revealed*. Some will be similar in content and structure to the exercises you are familiar with, whilst others are quite different. As I have emphasised throughout the first course the exercises are crucial to your magical and spiritual development. Knowledge by itself is a fine thing, but it is the practice of what you have learnt that will make you an effective Witch. Just like in *Wicca Revealed* it is best to do the exercises regularly, at the same time of day (or night) and in a place set for the purpose. Should you wish to try these exercises in a different location than usual, either inside or outside, you know enough about setting up a consecrated space to make this effective. Make sure that you keep a record of these exercises in your Book of Shadows, Book of Mirrors or journal. By now you should have a considerable record of your magical work, which will continue to be of use throughout your development. As before, this work is best done in loose fitting clothing, or robes, and the use of incense and candles is recommended. If you find it relaxing, use background music as well. Remember, before any magical work is undertaken it is always necessary to ground and centre so that your energies are optimised for the work to begin.

Regression Exercise

As you have learnt in this chapter, one way of predicting the future is to base it on events that have happened in the past. This is embodied perhaps most especially in the practices of Tarot and palmistry where certain cards, or the left hand, have meanings about events now gone. The following exercise will help you to have a wider knowledge of your own past, which will then give you better information upon which to predict the future and make your choices in life. Before starting make sure you ground and centre. For those who have got out of this habit two techniques are provided directly below; those that already practice this regularly can just skip the section.

Ground and Centre 1

Imagine that you are sitting in a forest glade with your back against a tree. Dappled light shines down on you through fresh green leaves. You can smell the scent of moss and pine, and feel the gentle rub of bark on your back. Slowly allow yourself to become absorbed into the tree. Feel your back become as one with the bark and fibre of the trunk until you can sense the tree's energy flowing through your body. Concentrate now on the light pouring down from the Sun, through the leaves, the twigs, the branches and the trunk of the tree. Feel the Sun's energy flowing through you as well. For a few moments allow the light to create a sense of well being and vitality as it seeps in to your very core. When you are ready let this energy pass through you, back into the tree, from where you can feel it

working its way downwards; down through the main roots, down through the root fibres, down to the dark rich earth.

Ground and Centre 2

Visualise a bright beam of light that stretches from your head down through your spine and into the ground. Allow yourself to feel the exchange of energy between you and the Earth and centre yourself upon the balance of energies, breathing in and out slowly as you do so.

Exercise

You are now going to go on a voyage -a voyage into yourself. As with many long journeys you will not be completing it all at once. Today you are going to look back at the past year, examining each season and the significant events that it has brought for you. It is very important that you maintain control of this meditation and do not let your mind wander from its overall structure. Like a journey you have somewhere to get to. By all means stop off and spend time exploring certain stopping points, but make sure you get back on the bus.

Breathe in for four, hold for four, and breathe out for four. Repeat this pattern for a few minutes.

Think of the season that you are now in. Go over in your mind the things that have brought you joy and pleasure. What were these things and why did they bring you contentment? Allow yourself to look in detail at your happy memories, what created the circumstances for these? Where were the roots of the circumstances? Let yourself go back in time as far as is necessary to see where these events had their beginnings.

Meditate on this for a few minutes.

Go back now to the season just passed. What were the significant events (either positive or negative) here? Why were they significant for you? Why did you judge them to be positive or negative? What created the circumstances for these? What were their beginnings? Again let yourself go as far back as is necessary to explore these things.

Meditate on this for a few minutes.

Repeat the process for the next two seasons back.

Become aware of your breathing again. Return to normal consciousness and record what you have found.

This meditation should be adapted so that you can regress as far backwards in time as you desire. So, instead of going back one season at a time try one year at a time, or every five or ten years. For all practitioners it should be quite possible to remember many events all the way back to early childhood, including many

memories that you may have forgotten. When practiced regularly over time, many Witches find that they can get back all the way to their first conscious experiences.

Two words of caution however; first, it is important not to dwell unduly on experiences judged to be negative, try to keep a balance and err on the side of the positive ; second, a number of students will have experienced more than their fair share of grief and tragedy. It is possible that particularly appalling events may well have been forgotten on purpose as the mind has judged them to be too painful for conscious awareness. For some, dealing with hidden dreadful memories on the conscious plane can be beneficial as it helps to explain patterns of behaviour that have been a puzzle, or even detrimental to the individual. However, others may find the experience overwhelming and difficult to handle. If you suspect that you have terrible hidden memories you will want to consider very carefully whether you want to use this exercise.

Invocations and Spells to be used before Divination

As you learnt above, some methods of divination rely on accessing the Akashic records through the use of intermediary forces and this is the reason why many who practice the Tarot, for example, will say a prayer or perform a short magical technique before they start, calling on divine guidance.

Other divination practices can be enhanced by using a spell to aid effectiveness.

Invocation

The invocation below can be used before a Tarot reading. It should be said with feeling and can be accompanied by the use of an invoking Pentagram of Earth made over the cards with a wand, an athame or the practitioner's hand.

The words given below have been based on the Golden Dawn's Tarot invocation.

"In the divine name of the Great Goddess (the name of your favoured goddess can be substituted here) I ask you to send the Great Angel HRU (pronounced Her oo) who art set over the operations of this Secret Wisdom, to lay thine hand invisibly upon these consecrated cards of art, that thereby I may obtain true knowledge of hidden things to the glory of your Divine Spirit. Amen".

Those who wish may use the original Golden Dawn version which reads:

"In the divine name LAO, I invoke Thee thou Great Angel HRU who art set over the operations of this Secret Wisdom. Lay thine hand invisibly on these consecrated cards of art, that thereby I may obtain true knowledge of hidden things, to the glory of the ineffable Name. Amen."

Spell

The following spell can be most effective in setting the tone for a divination. It can be easily adapted to a variety of situations.

Ground and centre.

Perform an invoking Pentagram of Earth over the medium used for divination. Say:

“O Great Goddess (the name of your favoured goddess can be substituted here) I ask that I may be guided to see the events of the past as they relate to the matter in hand, from these visions give me the power to see how the future might unfold so that I may give wise counsel to those who are involved.”

Visualise yourself successfully divining using your chosen method. Then say:

“I bless all who are affected by this divination, may they find their true path in the light of the Great Spirit. So mote it be!”

End Blessing

You have now completed the first chapter of a course that will greatly deepen your knowledge of Wicca and magical practice. You have one month in which to digest the material and incorporate the exercises into your life.

Now that you have reached this stage in your magical and spiritual development try to consider the ways that what you now know can be used to benefit others who come into your life.

I wish you love and joy as you expand your awareness of the religion of Wicca and explore how it can be used to the greater good of those around you.

Light and Love.

Blessed Be.

See you next lesson.

Notes

- [1] Aleister Crowley, *Book of Thoth*, Weiser, 1999, p. 82.
- [2] Janet and Stewart Farrar, *A Witches' Bible, The Complete Witches' Handbook: Part Two, The Witches' Way*, Phoenix Publishing Inc, 1996, p. 200.
- [3] Israel Regardie, *The Tree of Life, An Illustrated Study in Magic*, ed. Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero, Llewellyn, 2003, p. 449.
- [4] Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance, A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, Harper, p. 169.
- [5] See the research of Michel Jovet in "Recherches sur les structures nerveuses et les m³/₄ canismes responsables des differentes phases du sommeil physiologique", *Archives Italiennes de Biologie*, 125 153, 1962.
- [6] See Dean Radin, *Time-reversed Human Experience: Experimental evidence and implications*. This article is available for free on the internet at: <http://www.boundaryinstitute.org/articles/timereversed.pdf>
- [7] See, for example, Brian Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos*, Vintage, 2005, "Just as we envision all of space as really being out there, as really existing, we should also envision all of time as really being out there, as really existing too."
- [8] See Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time, From the Big Bang to Black Hole*, Bantam Books, 1998, p.62.
- [9] On the "Copenhagen Interpretation" see the University Of Stamford, Encyclopaedia of Philosophy at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qm-copenhagen/> . It should be borne in mind that the "Copenhagen Interpretation" is just one possible way of looking at Quantum Theory and today has competition from the "Many Worlds Interpretation" which does not rely on the notion of an observer or quantum collapse, on this see the University Of Stamford, Encyclopaedia of Philosophy at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qm-manyworlds/> .See also James L. Foberg, Quantum Consciousness and your Immortality, p.54, available for free on the Internet at <http://home.infiOnline.net/~jforberg> .
- An interesting thought experiment discussed between Albert Einstein and Erwin Schrodinger regarding these principles is known as "Schrodinger's Cat". You can find a short article here:
<http://webs.mn.catholic.edu.au/physics/emery/brainteasers.htm#Schrodinger>. I am indebted to Deirdre Hebert for providing me with this link.
- [10] C. G. Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, Picador, 1989, pp.3-4.
- [11] Most notably in *Job* (37:7), *Proverbs* (3:16), *Isaiah* (8:11) and *Samuel* (26:18).
- [12] On the history of Palmistry see Lori Reid, *The Complete Book of the Hand, A Modern Approach to Hand Analysis*, Pan, 1991, pp. 5-11.

[13] Olaus Magnus (1490-1557 or 8) was also a historian and geographer. The relevant work is *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, Rome, 1555.

[14] Such a definition can be found in standard dictionaries.

Chapter Two: Celebrating the Cycle of Human Life

Celebrating the Cycle of Human Life

"The angel that presided over my birth

Said 'Little creature, form'd of Joy & Mirth,

Go love without the help of any Thing on Earth."

From William Blake, *The Angel That Presided Over My Birth*

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will learn about the Wiccan ways of honouring the stages of a human life.

Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete.

There are also two lesson related exercises for you to work on.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Celebrating the Cycle of Life

In *Wicca Revealed* you learnt about how Witches celebrate the seasonal cycles and honour the Goddess and the God. In this chapter you will learn how the stages of human life are marked and a number of relevant rites and ceremonies are provided that can be adapted for your needs.

One of the ways that we can give our lives meaning is by expressing the importance of various stages in our life, not only to ourselves but to others in our community.

Birth, marriage and death are obviously significant stages in the development of life but the type of significance, and the extent and depth that they have, is very much something that we give to these occasions. This is determined by the framework within which we see ourselves existing. Different individuals and different cultures have varying beliefs and do things in diverse ways. For example, some treat death as an almost taboo subject too dreadful to countenance, and, when it happens, it is viewed as an immense loss and tragedy for they reckon that there is no life beyond the grave. Others take the opposite view and discuss death without fear, seeing it as a cause for celebration for it is another stage of development leading to a spiritual existence or reincarnation. In Wicca there are generally accepted views about the stages of life, although little standardisation of ceremonies especially those relating to death. The ceremonies that are written in this chapter are, therefore, suggestions that a Witch or coven may wish to take on or adapt as they see fit.

The question of who should lead these ceremonies is a thorny one. There are many in Wicca who believe that only Third Degree Witches should be allowed, whilst some traditions let Second, or even First Degree Witches perform the rites. Those that don't operate degree systems may either elect people to perform ceremonies, or, in some instances, let the leader or leaders just naturally emerge. My advice would be that regardless of degree status, those that lead these important ceremonies should be people who have experience and are comfortable with organising and taking responsibility for events that mark a crucial stage in an individual's life. They should also have the confidence of the group. There will, therefore, be a number of Witches who have the capability, gained outside of their religion, which amply qualifies them for the job. However, it would be fair to say that a good grounding in Wicca is also essential, but again, this can be achieved without working in a degree system.

Some Wiccans feel it is important that their ceremonies should be as legally binding as those of other faiths, and why not? Obviously questions of legality will depend on the country that the rites are being carried out in. It will also depend on how the legal system views Wiccan rituals, as well as the religion itself, and the status it accords to its priesthood. Those that want to go down this path will need to research the requirements with the relevant authorities in plenty of time before the event.

The ceremonies below are written so that they can be easily adapted for a variety of leadership possibilities. In today's Wiccan world it is no longer good enough to assume that ceremonies are led by a High Priestess and Priest, as the fact is there are a number of covens with either an all male or female membership, and there are also those that prefer to have one person leading at events such as these.

I make no comment on the validity of these diverse approaches, other than to say that where one individual leads they should amalgamate the speaking parts and the ritual motions given in the lesson as they see fit and, if two people of the same gender officiate then obviously there will be two High Priestesses or Priests.

At certain points in the ceremonies I have also opted for using non-gender specific terms such as "parents", "partner" and "couple" as it seems right that the ceremonies should use terminology appropriate for both mixed and same sex partnerships.

Some traditions have the view these ceremonies should be performed at certain phases of the Moon or during Sabbats, where they become additional to the celebration in hand. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this, I would add that there is nothing stopping these rites being performed at any time and that there is something to be said for making them a special occasion.

There are no standard ceremonies in Wicca and even within traditions their practice can vary markedly. The following have been created from a variety of Wiccan and High Magical sources, although they all incorporate original ideas and language. They are therefore a synthesis. Those that wish are encouraged to

consult the relevant books that are given in the reading list at the lesson's end. It goes without saying that these ceremonies can be added to beautifully and effectively by one or two well chosen readings. Poetry is popular at these events and some excellent anthologies that can be dipped into are given in the reading list.

Please note that in the ceremonies the generic terms "Goddess" and "God" have been used and, of course, the names of a preferred Deity can be substituted.

Wiccaning

In all cultures the birth of a child is a significant event. Children represent the future of humankind; they are the continuation of existence that for Witches is echoed in their myths and stories of the cycles of the Goddess and the God. They are the incarnation of a soul, and should be celebrated for the joy that they are able to bring to themselves and the world. For some religions the birth of a child is an opportunity to commit them to a faith; a commitment it is hoped that the child will give conscious acceptance of at a later date. This can be contrasted to the Wiccan belief that their children should be allowed to choose a faith for themselves, should they so want one. Of course, most Wiccans bring their children up surrounded by the ceremonies and paraphernalia of Witchcraft, and many also allow, or actively encourage, their children to take part at an early age. Witches view this as sharing their faith with their children and not committing them to it. However, in effect they are being instructed in Wicca from birth and this approach is therefore open to the charge of indoctrination. Whether this is actually the case, or something that is right or wrong, is an issue that Wiccan parents may want to consider.

Wiccaning is the term that Witches use to describe the celebration of a child's birth. Above all this is a rite of joy and thanks, but it is also a ceremony of the obligations of the parents and any chosen guardians. By guardians is meant a person or persons who promise to fulfil the role of parents should they die before their child reaches adulthood. Some Witches, adopting Christian terminology, use the word "godparents", to mean the same thing. In general it is believed that such people do not have to be Witches themselves but they should broadly be in agreement with Wiccan philosophies and practices, or at least accepting of them, and should be sincere in the promises that they will have to make.

It is essential to have practiced the ceremony with the parents and the guardians before it actually takes place in front of family and friends, so that everyone is clear as to what they should be doing. It is also a good idea to make sure that guardians understand the gravity of what they are promising. This doesn't need to be laid on too thick, but they are making a public commitment to the well being of a child.

The altar should be laid out with a cloth expressive of new life. Some Witches will choose green, others gold or yellow. Two candles of a similar colour can be

chosen, flowers may be laid between them. It can be a lovely idea to put pictures of departed ancestors on the altar, so that they too may be present in memory at least.

There should be olive oil placed on the altar and beneath it can be put any gifts for the child. Incense can be used to perfume the air but bear in mind that some of the guests may have allergies. To one side food and drinks can be made ready for the party after the ritual. The circle can be laid out with flowers and greenery that are typical of the time of year. A cauldron can be placed in the middle of the circle and this, of course, represents the womb; an especially beautiful floral display should be reserved for it.

The majority of the Opening of the Temple is performed up to the end of hailing the Archangel Uriel, the *Witches' Rune* should be omitted as it could potentially upset the baby with everyone chanting. The child, the parents, and the guardians should be in the circle before the casting so that it can be made around them. The rest of the group should be led into the circle at the point of its conjuring as usual, except that they should do this in a way that takes account of the child and sit down once they have found their space.

The High Priestess says:

"We meet in this circle today to celebrate a new life. The life of _____, son/daughter of _____ and _____. Upon this child we ask for the blessing of the great Goddess and God (the names of deities that the group usually uses can be substituted here) without whom nothing could be."

The High Priest says:

"May they grant that _____ stays ever in joy and light, and that they find for themselves their own path, whatever that may be."

The High Priestess says:

"Along life's journey may _____ be watched over and protected by the Divine Powers, so that they may learn and grow from the challenges that will come, and turn them to their best advantage."

High Priest:

"_____ and _____, parents of _____ bring him/her to the altar, so that he/she may be blessed."

The parents of the child come forward and present the baby to the High Priest. He takes the baby in their arms.

The High Priestess anoints the child on the forehead with the water consecrated at the beginning of the ceremony whilst the High Priest holds the child. This is done in the form of an invoking Pentagram of Earth.

"I anoint thee _____ with water and bless you in the name of the Goddess."

The anointing is then repeated, this time with olive oil.

"I anoint thee _____ with oil and bless you in the name of the God."

Whilst the High Priestess looks on the High Priest then gives the child back to the parents and moves to present the family to the Watchtower Archangels. This process is started in the East.

He says:

“Raphael, Archangel of Air and of healing, we do bring before you _____ who has been blessed within our circle of power. Let it be known that _____ is under the protection of the Goddess and the God.”

This process is repeated for the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Uriel at their respective directions.

Having finished presenting the parents and their baby to Uriel, the family and the High Priestess and Priest should all turn to face the altar in the East. The High Priestess says:

“Great Goddess, allow this child the gift of wisdom and the power of choosing right from wrong.”

The High Priest says:

“Great God, allow this child the right of health so that they may grow strong and live a full life.”

The High Priestess says:

“Great Goddess, allow this child the joy of love, so that they may give and receive it.”

The leaders, parents and child turn and face West. The High Priestess says:

“Are there persons present who will act as guardians to _____?” They are beckoned forward. To each in turn is said the following:

“Will you _____, solemnly swear that you will support and guide _____ throughout their childhood, in harmony with his/her parents’ wishes?”

The guardian replies:

“Yes, so do I swear.”

After their assent the High Priestess continues:

“Do you further undertake to raise this child as your own should his/her parents depart from this earthly plane before they have reached adulthood?”

The guardian replies:

“Yes, so do I swear.”

If there are two guardians the process is repeated this time with the High Priest leading.

High Priestess:

“The powers of the Great Goddess and God have blessed this child and the Archangels acknowledge and proclaim that they have the protection of our divine Lady and Lord. We welcome _____ in love and light.”

May the enchanting Moon

And the never ending Sun

Both shine down in peace

On_____ our newest one.

So mote it be.”

All can now be seated.

The cakes and wine are now consecrated and passed round as usual.

The formal part of the ceremony is now over and other food and drink may be enjoyed and any presents opened.

Handfasting

Handfasting is the Wiccan term for the joining of two people in marriage, whether it be male or female, female and female or male and male. For many a wedding is an important way to acknowledge the serious commitment that they have towards another human being. It is a public declaration of love that lets the community know that two individuals wish to share each others lives.

Often the Wiccan concept of marriage is quite different from ones espoused by other religions. A Wiccan marriage is not of the “for better or worse” variety where two people are expected to cohabit when they no longer feel any love, respect or attraction for each other. This is not to say, though, that a Wiccan marriage is a frivolous undertaking where a couple may break up on a whim. On the contrary, it is expected that a couple work through any problems that they may have, in the belief that this will make them stronger as a partnership and as individuals. However, if they really are irreconcilable then they may go their own separate ways. It is important to note that this is done without any stigma attached. Just because a marriage hasn’t lasted a life time it is not seen as a failure, and neither is it reflective of the quality of the individuals within it.

It is often a good idea for the prospective couple to discuss the seriousness of what they are about to commit to with an elder they respect, and that they can both turn to later on in the relationship. It can be important for a couple to discuss their aspirations, hopes and fears with an impartial third party as it helps them to define the kind of relationship that they want from the outset. An elder figure can also give counsel and advice when times are tough, or even if the couple need guidance about mundane day to day things. For this reason an Elder is incorporated into the ceremony below.

Handfasting can take quite a lot of planning and this should be discussed well in advance (at least a month or two, and for a big Handfasting up to a year before) between the Elder and whoever leads the ceremony. Some important points to make sure a couple have got clear are given below:

Are non-Wiccan family to be invited? How are they to be invited? How many can be expected? Where are they coming from? Do they need somewhere to stay? How will they be incorporated into the ceremony? Is there enough space within the chosen location for them to sit or stand and observe? Will they be shown where to go? Who will do this?

If a photographer is to be present consideration needs to be made as to how they will manage to take shots. Will they be part of the circle? Will they be outside it? How much space do they need? It may seem trivial, but a photographer pushing past those attending the ceremony to get that great shot can be very obtrusive.

Will there be a reception afterwards? If so, where? Who will be invited? What form will it take? Will there be caterers? Are other Witches supplying the refreshments? Will there be entertainment?

Will there be speeches? Who will announce them? When will they take place?

The couple might also like to consider how they want to dress for the occasion and whether they want to give an overall theme to the wedding that guests can join in with if they want. Some like to have a big production, full of spectacle and surprise, and others want a small quiet intimate affair. There is nothing wrong with either; it is just necessary that the options are thought through carefully and the appropriate plans put into place.

All this may seem too much like wedding planning from other religions, but, as was stated at the start of the section, Handfasting is a public declaration and, depending on how far the couple intend to make it public (Witches, friends, close family, extended family), these things need to be thought about. Too often Wiccan instructions on Handfasting are a few paragraphs of a ritual and then the topic moves on; this doesn't really do justice to the dignity and importance of the occasion and can undermine it being taken seriously both by fellow Wiccans and outsiders.

The altar and the room that the couple are to be handfasted in can be set up in colours that they have chosen together (this is another reason for having the ceremony separate from a Sabbat). This includes choice of colour for the altar candles and the types and quantities of the flowers and floral displays that are used. Upon the altar should be placed the rings (what these are made from the couple should decide for themselves) and it is a good idea if these are placed on a small cushion. The circle can be marked out in flowers if the couple so wish, leaving a gap in the North East for the coven to walk through. Remember spare flowers to close the circle once everyone is through.

As with all these ceremonies, it is important that it has been practiced before the actual event with the leader(s) of the ceremony as well as the Elder. It is also a good idea to have a couple of other Witches present who will assume duties such as ushering guests, closing the flower circle, and so on.

The Opening of the Temple is performed, up to, and including, the *Witches' Rune*. The couple should be led into the centre of the room and made to face West

[1]; the direction of Water and the element of emotion and love. The circle is formed around them. Whoever is to close the circle should either be first or last in, as they will be nearest the gap that needs to be closed. The leader of the ceremony should also face West but stand behind and back from the couple.

The Elder speaks first:

"I announce to all present that we have two in our circle who desire to be joined in Handfasting today."

High Priest:

"Let them be named to the coven."

The Elder steps forward to the couple and all three face the leader of the ceremony and the altar in the East.

"There names are _____ and _____." Witch names are as valid here as names the couple were given at birth.

The High Priestess steps up towards one of the partners:

"Are you _____? And what do you seek today?"

The partner replies:

"I am indeed _____ and I desire to be joined with _____ beneath the ever watchful gaze of the great Goddess and God."

The High Priest addresses the other partner:

"Are you _____? And what do you seek today?"

The partner replies:

"I am indeed _____ and I desire to be joined with _____ beneath the ever watchful gaze of the great Goddess and God."

The High Priestess now takes up either the sword (if one is used) or an athame. It is held up high while she speaks out:

"Great Goddess and God, here stand the Witches _____ and _____ who desire to be joined within your realm. We ask you to listen to the love they have to declare before pronouncing that they are worthy."

The High Priestess then places the sword or athame at the first partner's chest:

"Now must you pronounce the nature of your love to the Goddess and the God. Be true in what you have to say. Repeat after me:

"I _____ have come here freely to ask for divine blessing on my partnership with _____."

"I do swear before all present here today, both mortal and spiritual, that I will love, honour and cherish _____ with all my heart, whilst we are joined as one through this Handfasting."

"During this partnership I will always work for the joy and well-being of _____ and defend them with my life should the need arise."

"May the Goddess and God give me the strength, wisdom and courage to keep the things I vow today. Should I be insincere I deserve nothing but their disdain. So mote it be."

The High Priestess presents the sword to the High Priest who then turns to the other partner and places the athame or sword at their chest and the same process is repeated:

"Now must you pronounce the nature of your love to the Goddess and the God. Be true in what you have to say. Repeat after me:

"I _____ have come here freely to ask for divine blessing on my partnership with _____."

"I do swear before all present here today, both mortal and spiritual, that I will love, honour and cherish _____ with all my heart, whilst we are joined as one through this Handfasting."

"During this partnership I will always work for the joy and well-being of _____ and defend them with my life should the need arise."

"May the Goddess and God give me the strength, wisdom and courage to keep the things I vow today. Should I be insincere I deserve nothing but their disdain. So mote it be."

The High Priest presents the sword back to the High Priestess who now turns to the altar and raises it up high:

"Great Goddess and God you have heard what these two Witches have sworn. Guide _____ and _____ along life's journey together, watch over and protect them, show them how they may learn and grow from the challenges that will come, and how they may turn them to their best mutual advantage."

The High Priestess puts down the sword, picks up the cushion with the rings on it and turns towards the couple:

"You have entered into a sacred partnership that none but yourselves may dissolve. Remember well that mutual love and mutual trust is grown and kept alive by all that you say and all that you do. As you give love, so shall you receive love, as you give joy, so shall you receive joy, as you give strength, so shall you receive strength, as you give wisdom so shall you both become wise. During the life of the Handfasting you have agreed to ever have this at the front of your minds."

The High Priestess turns to one partner and says:

"Take up the ring you have chosen for _____ and place it on his/her finger. Repeat after me:

"With this ring"

"I do join with"

"_____, whom I love with all my heart."

"The Divine Ones protect us."

"Our Witch friends will guide us."

"Never do I wish us to part."

The High Priest now takes over and turns to the other partner and repeats the process:

"Take up the ring you have chosen for _____ and place it on his/her finger. Repeat after me:

"With this ring"

"I do join with"

"_____, whom I love with all my heart."

"The Divine Ones protect us."

"Our Witch friends will guide us."

"Never do I wish us to part."

The High Priestess now proclaims:

"In the eyes of the great Goddess and God, in the eyes of all gathered here today, you are now joined as one. So mote it be."

At this point the partners can kiss.

The end of the ceremony very much depends on who has been invited. If it is an all Witches affair then the couple could move deosil (clockwise) round the circle so that they can be congratulated by those present. Cakes and ale could then follow, before dissolving the circle and having a Handfasting reception.

If non-Wiccans have been invited it may be a good idea to dissolve the circle after the partner's have kissed so that the couple can be congratulated by everyone present.

Funeral Rite

For this incarnation at least, death is the final stage in a person's life. Death is one of the ceremonial areas of Wicca that is even less standardised than the others that mark the stages of life. In some respects this is because there is generally within the religion a concentration on the present world and life. This is reflected in the fact that there are very few Wiccan works in print that deal with this important aspect of existence in any depth. For this reason many of the points made in this section are entirely of my own, although there will probably be a number of Witches who have developed similar views across various traditions. However, there will just as likely be many who don't agree. This, of course, should be welcomed as healthy debate and it is a debate Wicca perhaps needs to have.

In the natural world death can be seen to be part of the Great Wheel of Life. It is observed that things are born, things grow, they reproduce and they die, and yet this cycle constantly renews itself. A cyclic pattern is seen as existing in all levels of manifest nature, both animate and inanimate, both of the world and of the stars.

On the other hand Spirit, the substance that pervades all matter, is seen as being immortal.

Whether human life exists after death rests on how the human cyclic model functions and the nature of Spirit within us. Like all animate things we are born, we reproduce and we die. On a physical level this much is obvious. Yet Wiccans believe that part of who they are is made from an immortal spirit within them. Like our physical selves this is of the Goddess and the God, but at the same time retains individuality. Like a cell within a body, Spirit has its own existence and its own functions but it works in harmony with other parts to make up the whole. This spiritual "Us" is capable of going through many incarnations, not just on this planet and in a human form, but on other worlds and in other beings. This, of course, begs the question as to what type of entities a spirit, that at the present is part of a human, would enter into in a later incarnation. No Witch text to my knowledge answers this point. I would venture that, although it is capable of living in any creature or anything, because it has already lived in an organism of the order of a human, the spirit would likely choose to become another human or a similar creature.

There are of course many, many accounts of reincarnation and past life memory from diverse cultures throughout the whole of human history. I do not propose to get into a lengthy debate here of whether these are real or not. Obviously, those that have past life recollections where they were Cleopatra or King Arthur can expect some raised eyebrows. But the fact is that the vast majority of recollections are of people who lived a life that has hardly touched the historical record. There are many accounts of persons who believe they once were nuns or monks, factory or office workers, market sellers, gardeners and so on. Some of these people have always lived with these memories and find nothing especially unusual in them. Others, under hypnosis or deep relaxation, find to their complete astonishment that they have clear recollections which, furthermore, have proved to be correct through the use of historical records and memories of buildings still standing.

Accepting that these memories are true allows us to answer the much more interesting question of what they are. Many who believe in reincarnation will say that the person has lived before as someone else. Yet there is another way reincarnation can be explained broadly in keeping with the Wiccan faith. Witches accept the existence of an Akashic record. This is where all human memory, through all times, is stored. Psychology would call it the collective unconscious. Could it perhaps be, that rather than remembering a life once lived, those that claim past life experiences are, in fact, recalling a memory of someone else's existence through this phenomenon, albeit they are experiencing it in a very real way, as if it is really them? It would be honest to say that in our present stage of knowledge we simply don't know for sure. All it is possible to say is that, however it works, many Witches believe in reincarnation.

Some though (both Wiccan and non-Wiccan) object to this belief on the grounds that if reincarnation did exist how come the population of the Earth is

expanding? Surely there are a finite amount of souls? To this could be answered that there is nothing stopping the creation of new souls, not everyone after all has past life recollection even under hypnosis. A less easy question to answer is, if reincarnation exists, how is it possible to invite back the spirits of departed ones at the festival of Samhain? If the individual has gone on to another incarnation, surely they can't come back as the person they once were? Wicca does not provide a standard answer to this question. There are, of course, a number of arguments and conjectures that could be made to get around this problem. Complicated theories of when the dead reincarnate could be developed; an argument could be made that a spirit can back track into a previous incarnation and so on. Perhaps the simplest explanation is to say that no-one knows when a spirit moves on to another incarnation and that Samhain should be more a celebration of the person in the life they were known for.

A more difficult challenge to answer is what is the point of reincarnation? To this those that believe in it commonly have two responses. The first is complex utilising cosmological theories where the soul progresses through incarnations, leading to an ultimate union with the Divine. Another way of replying is to answer with a question: what is the point of life? To this, a very simple answer can be given; we are here to live, and to live in as joyous a way as we possibly can, given who we are and what we have around us. We believe we go through many incarnations and in each one we should strive to create happiness for ourselves and those we have contact with. Does life actually need to go somewhere? Does it need to reach a defined point? We are conscious of only living in the present – how many of us truly concentrate on the good things to be found right here and now?

Having aired various arguments about how reincarnation exists and what it might be for, let us consider its mechanics. What happens at death and what does it lead to? It must be stated here that there are few Witches who would be definite in their pronouncements on the Afterlife. What writing exists on the topic is very much couched in terms of suggestions and possibilities. Within a number of “occult” organisations there are many who talk of a deity or angel who aids the soul in its transition from this world. This entity is referred to as a psychopomp, and in Wicca can take the form of an angel, especially Azrael, the angel of Death. Many Witches believe that Azrael leads the soul into a place called the Summerlands (also referred to as the Otherworld) where it will rest between incarnations. This location is generally viewed as having an existence on the astral plane. How one views this place depends greatly on one's beliefs. Some believe that the sort of place and who one meets there will depend on what they might have done in their present incarnation; this is important for Witches who advance the idea that parts of the personality continue in the afterlife. Others think this outlook smacks of a Christian idea of Heaven and Hell. Perhaps another way to explain the Summerlands is to say that what you find there very much depends on what you do there. However this may be, having spent time in this place, the soul is then seen as withdrawing, so that all that is left is the spirit. As the time for the next incarnation approaches, the spirit starts to collect the materials required for a

new personality and then ensouls a foetus at conception, so that a new cycle begins.

Having established that many Wiccans believe in reincarnation, and seen how it may work, attention can now be turned to presenting a ceremony that marks the passing of a soul from this life into the next. The “breaking the bowl” part of the ceremony and the use of the silver chord derives directly from the Farrars’ Requiem in *A Witches’ Bible* [2]. It is such a lovely and powerfully symbolic event that I had to include it in the ceremony. The ceremony also makes use of a trumpet. The High Priest who blows it will need to make sure that he can perform an extended single note. If he can’t manage it, and there is no-one else who can, it is best left out, as an undignified raspberry will ruin the proceedings. If they feel they want to, there are suggested points at which the deceased’s partner, family or friends can speak. If they don’t, then either the High Priestess or Priest, or other coven members, can say the words instead.

If the deceased has expressed a preference then the altar, the room and the circle can be decorated as they have asked or as their partner, a close relative or friend decides. A bowl with a silver chord tied to it should be placed on the altar; there should be a cloth to rest it on, as well as a hammer. The bowl symbolises the individual’s incarnation and the silver chord stands for the ties between the physical and astral realms.

The Opening of the Temple up to, and including, the *Witches’ Rune* should be performed.

The High Priest of the ceremony gives a single extended blast on the trumpet.

The High Priestess says:

“We have gathered here today in both sadness and joy. We are sad because we shall no longer see _____ in the incarnation that we have known him/her. _____’s body returns to the Earth from which it came, to become one with the dark Goddess. Yet we are also full of joy for we know that they are beginning their journey to the Otherworld, a journey into spiritual light.”

A friend or family member says:

“First the ties with this world must be broken, so that they may be set free to go.”

At this point the leader of the High Priest picks up the bowl, the cloth and the hammer. He lays it on to the floor and says:

“From this world you have gone; to the next we commend you.”

The bowl is wrapped in the cloth and smashed with the hammer. The High Priest gathers it up, taking care that pieces don’t spill out, and places it and the hammer back on the altar.

The deceased’s partner/family member says:

“Now that they are free from earthly bonds we ask that the angel Azrael, the angel of death, guide _____ to the realm of the Summerlands where he/she can enjoy a welcome rest before their next incarnation.”

A family member/friend says:

"We ask too that the great God, lord of the shadows and bearer of the descending light, watch over and illumine your path so that you may quickly find your way."

The High Priestess says:

"We shall all now turn to the West, the direction of Death and Initiation. Now do we send you our energy and our love, may you ever exist in joy."

The coven draws their athames, or can point with their forefingers, and concentrates on channelling energy down through their blades and into the West.

The High Priestess says:

"We send you all our love. We will never forget you and ask that you do not forget us. Until we meet again, in some other life and in some other place, we bid you farewell."

All present now say:

"So mote it be."

The main part of the ceremony is now over. Thought, though, should be given to cakes and ale, or the feast. It may well be that there will be some present who feel distressed and want to have some time by themselves. Having to wait around through the cakes and ale before the circle is taken down could potentially be difficult. I would therefore suggest that the deceased's partner and/or close family are consulted as to whether they would like the circle to be dissolved straight away, allowing those that want to have privacy. A reception could then be held, allowing people to come and go as they wish. There is nothing worse than feeling trapped by convention and etiquette at a funeral rite.

Research Project

This month's research project has two parts:

1. The ceremonies in the main lesson are made to be adapted and added to. Take some time to explore suitable poetry or prose that can be used for readings. Better still write your own. Why not share what you have found or composed with the other students by posting your ideas and creative writings onto the Magicka School website Forum.

2. Some Wiccans like the idea of their ceremonies being legally binding. If you live in a country such as the USA or the UK where Wicca is perfectly legal make some enquiries as to the requirement for legally binding rites. A good starting point for this would be the local office for births, marriages and deaths, or the local library. Even in liberal multi-cultural cities like London or San Francisco this can be a little intimidating, and you may find some officials are a little fazed by the request. Maybe take a friend and don't allow yourself to be put off – you have a religion that is just as entitled to respect as anyone else's. Post what you have found out onto the Forum as this will be a valuable resource for others.

Exercises

Past Life Recollection

As was stated in the lesson above not everyone will have had a previous incarnation, and not everyone who has will remember one. It may therefore be possible that this exercise produces no results. Nonetheless it is worth trying.

Before you start, spend some time over a number of days thinking carefully about a period of history that you have felt drawn to. It may be that you have an in depth knowledge of your chosen period and place through study and travel or it may be that, although you are drawn to a time and location, you have never actually spent time finding out about it. Think about what it is that has interested you exactly. Different people will have different points of reference, for example, some are drawn to Ancient Egypt because of the art, others by the architecture, and others because of the religious systems. Even if you think you know next to nothing write down your impressions of what you think it must have been like. Think of all the senses; what would the world around you look like, who and what would you see? Consider what sounds you would hear, as well as what life would have smelt, tasted and felt like. Think about this in detail and be as specific as possible. For example, if you imagine the smell of cooking, what precisely was it? If you saw people, who were they and how did they dress and move? It is very important to write down what you imagine was the case.

Just by doing this you may find some patterns that can give a clue to a past life. Does the world you imagine fit into what any particular class of people might have seen? Are you drawn to the wealthy, the poor, the religious, or the artisan class?

You can now practice meditation on possible past life experiences over the next couple of days.

Breathe in for seven, hold for seven, and breathe out for seven. Repeat this pattern for a few minutes.

Think of the notes that you have put together over the last few days. Think about the type of people you were drawn to in particular? What would be your preferred relationship to them? Do you see yourself as a friend, an employee, a co-worker, or someone in charge? Don't push this unduly; just let whatever comes enter your mind.

Begin now to visualise a little more deeply. See the people around you. What do they look like, what are they doing, and how do they react to you?

Where are you? Take some time to contemplate the surroundings? What do they look like? What can you smell? If you were to touch things what would you feel? Let your mind wander where it will over these things. Don't try to control or force it.

Breathe in for seven, hold for seven, and breathe out for seven. Repeat this pattern for a few minutes.

Come to normal consciousness. Record your impressions. Remember, it may well be that you got nothing at all. It may be you got a little or a lot. Just try to be as honest as possible in what you saw.

It is worth trying this exercise another day. If you got nothing last time you may find that this time things come. Those of you that did get something may find more information is added.

Later in the month try this next meditation as well.

Breathe in for seven, hold for seven, and breathe out for seven. Repeat this pattern for a few minutes.

Think of your favourite period of history. If you were alive back then how were you dressed? What possessions did you have? What did you do with them?

Now think of the family you might have. Do you have a partner? What do they look like? Look at their physical features as well as how they were dressed? Can you see your parents? Are there any children or other relations? What do they do? Where do your relatives live? What kind of building is it? What is it near? Is there a river, the sea, a church or a cathedral nearby? Are you and your friends or family in a village or a town? Can you remember a place name? Spend time viewing the information that comes to you, let your mind wander where it will.

Breathe in for seven, hold for seven, and breathe out for seven. Repeat this pattern for a few minutes.

Come to normal consciousness. Record what you feel.

By now you will probably have found that you have some images of a life in a period of history. The big question now is, was what you saw part of a past life memory, or was it merely a series of imaginings suggested by a historical period? Some of you may not have enough information to work on to prove this to yourself or to others. It may all be vague, or what you clearly see isn't in any way verifiable. However, some might have crucial evidence in the form of a family name, a place name or images of buildings and natural features that may have withstood the ravages of time. If you are one of these lucky few you now have the basis of some research that you can now do to verify what you have seen in your mind's eye.

Spell of Happiness and Success

As has been often pointed out in the Magicka School courses, one of the most important things you can do as a being is to bless those around you. How many of us actually spend any time in our day actively willing someone well? Not many I suspect, in fact most of us are so preoccupied with our own worries that we find no time to consider others in a positive way.

The following is not an empty exercise. It is, in fact, one of the most significant things you can learn to do in your life. When you think about others in a positive way it not only makes you feel good but also has the effect of making them feel

great as well. The knock on effect of this is that you are happy, they are happy and together you will influence those around you to be happy. This effect happens whether or not you tell them what you have willed. If you don't believe this is possible I would challenge you to practice the following spell for just one month – see if your world and the world of the people you blessed is better or not as a result of what you willed for them, if only in small ways. It is possible to make this work just by thinking about things but by far the most powerful way is to create a spell. It can be used either for an individual or groups of people, make sure that you are able to visualise the number you choose.

Three more things before you start:

The spell works well on the level of creating a general air of positivity.

Don't leave people out of your spell on purpose. For example, you may want to do a blessing for those you work with and decide to leave out Margaret in accounts because she treats you meanly. Include them as sincerely as you do the others and watch the effects (don't forget you may need to allow a month though before you see results).

Wiccans tend to avoid making spells for others without their consent and knowledge. This is for sound reasons that they may produce undesired results. This spell therefore does not concentrate on specific outcomes and wishes only success and happiness for others; however they themselves may define it.

Prepare your magical space, face East and then ground and centre.

Concentrate on the person or persons that you wish to send your spell of well-being to. See them as feeling happy and successful. Make this image as bright as possible in your mind. See their smiles and feel their pleasure. Now state your will.

"I will that those I have visualised in my mind's eye be successful and happy however they themselves may define this."

Turn towards the West. Take your athame in your dominant hand (or wand if you prefer) and point it into the West. See energy channelling from above your head, through your body, and into the future, where it enters those you have visualised. Concentrate on this for a few minutes. Then say:

"I bless those that I have visualised to encounter this energy. May the light of the Divine enter their lives and lead them in their ways. So mote it be."

Release.

The spell is done. Make a record of this work in your Book of Mirrors or Shadows. You may wish to repeat it every week for a while. As you begin to see results make sure you record them.

End Blessing

Congratulations, you have now completed the second chapter of the course. Think carefully how you will make use of the things you have learnt and ask yourself how they can make a difference to your life as well as the lives of those around you. You have one month in which to digest the material and incorporate the exercises into your life.

I wish you the happiness that comes with the knowledge that what you do makes a positive difference to the world.

Light and Love.

Blessed Be

Notes

[1] Some prefer to use East, the direction of new beginnings. As always do what feels right for you, remember though to change the other directions in the ceremony to fit with what you decide.

[2] See A Witches Bible, *The Complete Witches' Handbook*, Phoenix Publishing Inc, 1996, pp. 166-173.

Chapter Three: Herbs and Herbal Preparations

Herbs and Herbal Preparations

*"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania some time of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight."*
-William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [1]

Please Note:

In this lesson you will only learn about herbs that are known not to generally have unpleasant side effects. I have taken every effort to ensure that the information I give is tried, tested and safe. Nonetheless, before embarking on using any of the lesson materials for medicinal purposes I recommend that you consult with a qualified medical practitioner. At times in the text I specifically state that some preparations should never be used by pregnant women, this is because some of the herbs can induce spasms or relax muscles, both of which are obviously undesirable. There is also some debate whether any herbal remedies should be used at all by those who are pregnant.

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will learn about herbs and herbal preparations. Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete. There are also two lesson related exercises for you to work on. Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge. Finally, there is a blessing.

Some Herb Basics

For modern day botanists herbs are non-woody, seed bearing plants that die down to the ground after flowering [2]. However, for the purposes of this chapter I will be using the definition of generations of herbalists, which states that an herb is any plant with leaves, seeds (including nuts) or flowers that can be used for medicinal, culinary or olfactory purposes.

For thousands of years humankind had used many plants to cure ailments, to flavour cooking, as ingredients for perfume and as part of magical and religious practices. Yet in the so-called "modern world" some of these ancient usages have

slowly all but disappeared. Many of us now have easy access to state run medical treatment which, with its seemingly wonderful and powerful drugs, has made the use of folk remedies steadily obsolete. Knowledge that our country-living ancestors would have commonly had about the various qualities of the plants around them has vanished with the mass migration of entire populaces to the cities. Magical herbalism has similarly ebbed away as folk traditions have given way first to Christianity and then to the industrial and technological revolutions. So much so, in fact, that today most individuals will only really make use of herbs in cooking.

And yet, herb lore has never quite withered and died. There are a growing number of colleges that offer herbal training, although these mainly concentrate on using herbs in medicine and for dietary considerations. These have proved increasingly popular over the last twenty years or so as some terrible side-effects of manufactured drugs have hit the headlines. Such colleges are also well attended by Witches who regard herbs as part of their stock in trades. Here, though, there is a gap in the market. Witches take a holistic approach to herbs as with much else in life. They have a great interest in the medicinal properties of herbs to be sure, but they are also keenly interested in their other properties and here they are less well served. In this chapter I have therefore included astrological, medicinal, magical, culinary and aromatic information.

Herbs and Astrology

It is generally not well known or appreciated how herbs and Astrology are linked and this is no doubt due to the paucity of well known sources on the subject [3]. However, there was a time when the two were seen as inextricable and it is no accident that in old herbals astrological information was often given in a special section about a particular herb [4].

The ancients believed in the doctrine of “As above, so below” [5], where the macrocosmic realm of the heavens was reflected in the microcosmic world of planet Earth. Herbalists and physicians would examine connections between the stars and planets, the human body and plants. Over time they were able to give a plant an astrological correspondence and then link it to a region or part of the human body.

This astrological information is given in the following two tables [6]:

Table Showing Planets and Associated Plants

Planet	Associated Plants
Saturn	Plants whose qualities are cooling: Tamarind, Barley and Comfrey Root. Woody Plants: Pine, Elm and Cypress. Others: Sloes, Barley, Quince and Red Beets.
Jupiter	Fruits: Currant, Figs, Olives, Rose Hips. Nuts: Almonds, Chestnuts. Others: Sage, Burdock and other dock leaves, Borage, Peas, Bugloss and Dandelion
Mars	Plants with thorns or prickles, such as: Hawthorn, Nettle, Barberry and Cacti. Also plants with a strong acrid taste: Parsley, All-Heal, Capers, Coriander, Garlic, Gentian, Hops, Horseradish, Mustards, Onion, Peppers, Radish and Tarragon.
Sun	Plants resembling the Sun in shape and/or colour: Camomile, Celandine, Century, Eyebright, European Angelica, Lovage, Orange, Rosemary, Rue, Storax and Saffron. But also: Vine, Bay Tree, Celery and Rue.
Venus	Mint, Bramble, Plums, Apples, Cherry, Primrose, Carnation, Thyme, Vervain, Daisies, Strawberry, Wheat, White Rose and Violet.
Mercury	Plants with airy looking leaves, such as: Marjoram, Caraway, Fennel, Carrots, Dill, Fennel, Pomegranate, Self Heal, Parsley, Lavender, Lily of the Valley, Marjoram, Parsnips, Hazelnut, Horehound and Mandrake.

Moon	Plants similar in shape and/or colour to the Moon: Cucumber, White Rose, Banana, Gourds, Mango, Melons, Pumpkin, Sweet Flag and Water Lilies. Plants in or near water: Seaweed, Watercress, Willow and Wintergreen. Also: Turnip (Moon in Pisces), Lettuce and Willow.
Earth	All rounded root vegetables: Potatoes, Beets and Onions.

Table Showing Star Signs and Associated Plants

Star Sign	Associated Plant
Aries	Most plants ruled by Mars including: Betony, Lichen and Rosemary. Also: Bramble
Taurus	Rules most plants governed by Venus and the Earth: Mushrooms and Root Vegetables (Potatoes, Carrots and Turnips).
Gemini	Rules the plants of Mercury as well as: Tansy, Vervain and Mosses.
Cancer	Rules many plants governed by the Moon as well as: Cucumber, Lettuce, Water Plants, Alder, Lemon Balm, Honeysuckle, Hyssop and Jasmine.
Leo	Plants governed by the Sun also including: Borage, Bugloss, Peony and Poppy.
Virgo	Rules cereal grains: Barley, Oats, Rye, Wheat, Grasses and Sedge.
Libra	Rules many of the plants related to Venus as well as: White Rose and other brightly coloured flowers.
Scorpio	Rules all the plants governed by Mars, also including: Basil, Bramble and palms.
Sagittarius	Rules: Oak, Beech and Elm, Mallows and Feverfew.

Capricorn	Rules all plants governed by Saturn, including: Hemlock, Nightshades and Yew.
Aquarius	Frankincense and Myrrh.
Pisces	Algae, Seaweed and Water Mosses.

The curative properties of a plant were closely allied to its ruling planet and star sign. For example, herbs ruled by Mars were prickly or strong-tasting, reflecting warlike or assertive Martian attributes, whereas plants of Taurus were solid, earthy root vegetables. These qualities in turn were often allied with a part of the human body. So, for example, Jupiter ruled the liver and it was thought that the juice of burdock (a plant ruled by that planet) would be good for ailments affecting it [7]. It was not always possible to find such a neat solution, however, and plants embodying one set of astrological qualities could be used to effectively treat a body part that was ruled by other celestial properties. So the throat, which was governed by Venus, could be treated with a gargle made of nettles, ruled by Mars. In such an instance one planetary property would be seen to compliment the other in effecting a cure, where warlike Mars and passive loving Venus found their balance in each other.

The following two tables give the main correspondences between areas of the body and the Star Signs and planets [8].

Table Showing Parts of the Body and Star Sign Correspondences

Area of Body	Astrological Sign
Head and face	Aries
Neck and throat	Taurus
Shoulders, arms and nerves	Gemini
Breast, lungs and stomach	Cancer
Heart, back and spine	Leo
Stomach and intestines	Virgo
Kidneys	Libra
Reproductive organs	Scorpio
Thighs and hips	Sagittarius
Bones, joints and knees	Capricorn
Circulation, lower legs and ankles	Aquarius
Feet and immune system	Pisces

Table Showing Some of the Parts of the Body and Planetary Correspondences

Body Part	Planet
Adrenals	Jupiter
Aorta	Sun
Arms	Mercury
Back	Sun
Bile	Mars
Blood	Mars/Jupiter
Bones	Saturn
Bowels	Mercury
Brain	Mercury
Breasts	Moon
Circulatory System	Mercury
Digestive System	Moon
Ears	Saturn (L), Jupiter(R)
Eyes	Sun
Feet	Jupiter
Genitals	Mars
Glandular Tissue	Moon
Hair	Mercury
Hands	Mercury
Heart	Sun
Joints	Saturn
Kidneys	Venus
Knees	Saturn
Lips	Venus
Liver	Jupiter
Lungs	Mercury
Lymphatic Glands	Moon
Muscles	Mars

Body Part	Planet
Nervous System	Mercury
Nose	Mars
Ovaries	Moon/Venus
Pancreas	Moon/Jupiter
Pituitary Gland	Jupiter
Sciatic Nerves	Jupiter
Sinews	Mars
Skin	Saturn
Stomach	Moon
Teeth	Saturn
Thighs	Jupiter
Throat	Venus
Thyroid Gland	Venus/Mercury
Tongue	Mercury
Uterus	Moon
Womb	Moon

Herbal Preparations

Throughout the rest of the lesson mention is made of a variety of herbal preparations and the method for making these is given here.

Infusions

Perhaps the simplest way of ingesting herbs for medicinal purposes is through making a tea or *tisane* from dried herbs consisting of the leaves, berries or flowers of the plant. The quantity of herb used depends on whether the infusion is to be weak or strong and typically ranges from 2 teaspoons to 1/2 a teaspoon upon which is poured 200ml (1/3 of a pint) of boiling water. Often honey or fruit juice are added to make the drink more palatable.

Decoctions

A decoction is the name given to heating an herb in water to extract the essence. When using roots or barks 900ml (1 1/2 pints) of water is added to 25g

(1oz) of the substance and together the ingredients are simmered for around 15 minutes until just 600ml (1 pint is left).

Dosages

With both infusions and decoctions children under five should be given one quarter of the adult dose, children between five and eleven should have half the dose.

Poultices

Poultices are packs that are applied over an affected area and are used to treat sore muscles, inflammations, arthritic pains and bruises. They are created by making a paste with hot water and herbs, to which is often added a binder like linseed meal or slippery elm powder. The paste is spread onto a flannel and applied directly onto the skin. To keep in the heat it can be covered with a thick cotton towel or cotton wool. Once cool or dry the poultice may then be removed.

Poultices should not be used on broken skin where their moisture and warmth can encourage bacteria to breed. However, they can be used on abscesses and boils to draw out infection.

Lotions

A lotion is used by straining an infusion or a decoction through coffee filter paper or a fine cotton cloth. Special care should be taken when preparing a lotion for the eyes or ears as even small pieces of herbs can damage these body parts.

Inhalations

Steam inhalations are made by adding 300ml (1/2 pint) of a strong infusion to 600ml (1 pint) of recently boiled water in a bowl. The individual covers their head and bowl with a large towel and breathes in the vapours through the nose and mouth. This is an especially effective method for treating respiratory problems of both the nose and chest.

Compresses

Put 1 or 2 drops of essential oil into a bowl of either cold, lukewarm or hot water depending on the condition being treated. A clean cotton cloth such as a handkerchief should be used to pick up the film of essential oil on the surface of the water and applied to the affected body part.

Massage oils

Use a 2 1/2 percent dilution. Just 10 drops of essential oil to 2 table spoons of virgin olive oil.

Baths

Use 5 to 10 drops of essential oil to 2 tablespoons of full fat cow's milk. Stir the bath water well to make sure the mixture is dispersed properly.

Some Common Herbs and their Uses

In this section of the lesson you will find a breakdown of a few of the most common herbs grown in gardens or widely available in supermarkets and garden centres. Reasons of space and time do not allow for a wide variety to be discussed. Those that are serious in their studies of herbs could use those plants outlined as the basis for their own herbal – this can be a lifetime's work (albeit a fascinating and useful labour) bringing together all the different properties of herbs in one place.

Celery



Botanical name: *Apium graveolens*

Family: *Apiaceae* (formerly *Umbelliferae*)

Part of the plant used: Stalks and seeds

The word celery comes from the Greek word *selinon*, which means parsley, Celery is in the same family and it will be observed that its leaves are very similar to the flat leaf variety of that plant.

It is a biennial plant which comes from the coasts of western and northern Europe, in the wild it can be found in ditches and salt marshes. Celery is a widely enjoyed vegetable used for its culinary properties. However it has a number of useful medicinal applications.

Please Note: The essential oil derived from the seeds should be avoided during pregnancy as they can stimulate the uterus. Seeds meant for cultivation should not be eaten or used in herbal preparations as they may have been sprayed with fungicides. Application to the skin of the essential oil should be avoided in sunlight as it can increase photosensitivity.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

Celery is ruled by the Sun.

There is a folkloric tradition that Witches would ingest the seeds of the plant to prevent dizziness, thus ensuring a safe flight on their broom sticks.

When chewed the seeds are supposed to increase concentration.

Burned with orris root, the seeds also have the reputation of increasing psychic powers.

The stalk and seeds are supposed to promote lust when eaten and it is reported that the women of Ancient Rome ate celery to increase sexual appetite.

Some Medicinal Uses

Celery is a gentle stimulant that nourishes and restores.

Rheumatoid Arthritis, Cystitis or Urethritis

When liquefied the juice of the stalks helps stimulate the flow of waste products from the body through the kidneys, quickening the flow of urine through the urinary system. An infusion made from the seed will have a similar effect when drunk three times a day.

Nervous Exhaustion

The juice acts as a pick me up.

Gout

Gout is caused by uric acid crystals collecting in the joints, the regular drinking of an infusion of the seeds can help ease this complaint as well as the drinking of the liquified stalks.

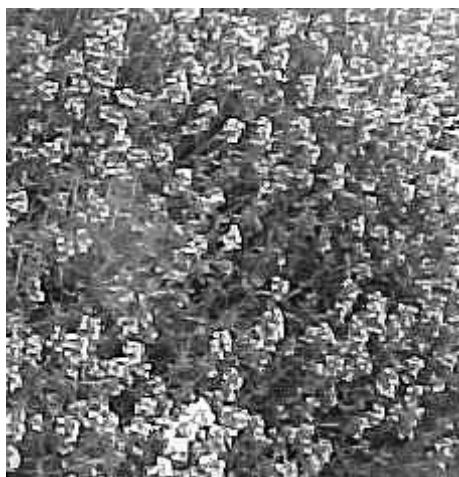
Urinary Stones

The root is an effective diuretic and can be liquified or eaten as a preventive for urinary stones. It also acts as a bitter digestive remedy and liver stimulant.

Some Culinary Uses:

Along with onions, carrots and parsley it is widely used as a base for sauces, stews and soups where it can be used either blanched or green. The seeds can also be used for flavouring. Celery stalks or seeds and salt can be used to spice cocktails, most famously a Bloody Mary.

Common Thyme



Botanical name: *Thymus vulgaris*

Family: *Labiatae*

Part of the plant used: Leaves and flowers

Common Thyme is one of several hundred species of the genus *Thymus*. These aromatic perennial herbs can grow to around to 40 cms tall (approximately 16 inches) and are found throughout Europe, North Africa and Asia. Common Thyme is a Mediterranean plant which thrives in well-drained soil and enjoys full Sun. It is likely that its spread throughout Europe was effected by the Romans who used it to purify and perfume their rooms.

The leaves and flowers contain volatile oils, bitters, tannins, sponins, and flavonoids. The essential oil of the plant, which undergoes distillation twice to remove irritating properties, is one of the most powerful herbal antiseptics.

Please Note: The oil distilled from the flowers of the plant should never be used undiluted on skin and not at all on the skin of children. A few drops may be used in a bath. It should not be used during pregnancy.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

Thyme is ruled by Venus

The Ancient Egyptians used this herb in embalming where its antibacterial qualities would have been of great use. The Greeks used it as an additive to their baths and burnt it as incense in their temples.

During the Middle Ages women are said to have given it to warriors as it was believed to bring courage to the wearer. Thyme could also be placed on coffins as it was believed to aid a safe journey into the next life.

It is a favourite herb of faeries and Shakespeare refers to the herb in the little folk classic *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [9].

Some Medicinal Uses

Digestion

An infusion of Thyme taken three times a day will act as an anti-flatulent, digestive tonic. Whilst the tannins the plant contains will soothe irritation and help prevent diarrhoea.

Throat and Mouth Infections

A strong infusion may be used as a gargle or mouthwash and the plant's strong antibacterial properties will help clear infection. Make sure though that a strong infusion isn't swallowed.

Respiratory Infections, Including Coughs, Asthma, Colds

A few drops of the essential oil may be added to hot water to make an effective inhalation that loosens phlegm and will also ease dry coughs.

Depression

When depressed after an illness an infusion of thyme drunk daily will help to lift the spirits and stimulate the central nervous system.

Diuretic

Thymes diuretic properties help quicken circulation and the removal of uric acid. An infusion drunk regularly will ease arthritis, gout and muscular aches and sprains.

Some Culinary Uses

Thyme aids the digestion of fats and it is therefore an excellent complement for any oily or fatty recipes. Because it has a pungent, strong flavour it is best used sparingly. It can be added to most soups, casseroles, breads and savoury scones.

Garlic



Botanical name: *Allium sativum*

Family: *Lillicae*

Part of the plant used: The clove, in botanical language this is known as a "corm".

Garlic is closely related to the onion, shallot, and leek. Peculiarly, it only grows when cultivated and is perhaps descended from the species *Allium longicuspis*, which grows wild in south-western Asia. It is, of course, most famous as a culinary herb, but more recently much attention has been given to its medicinal properties.

It is often recommended that a clove of Garlic should be eaten a day for its therapeutic properties but, as Culpeper observed, "The offensiveness of the breath of him that hath eaten garlic will lead you by the nose to the knowledge hereof..." [10] A modern alternative that produces little or no odour are Garlic oil capsules.

Please Note: When used in cooking quantities ingested are normally deemed safe; however, during pregnancy and lactation garlic can cause digestive problems such as heartburn.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

Garlic is ruled by Mars, presumably because of its combative properties as well as its strong smell.

Throughout history it has been viewed as a protective force, probably because it has always been known as an effective medicine. Most famously it is a powerful

disincentive against vampires, werewolves and devils and should be worn, hung up at windows or rubbed over keyholes.

Some Medicinal Uses

Digestion

It is widely thought that it is best eaten raw as cooking is believed to destroy its therapeutic properties. The cloves contain high concentrations of volatile oil and when crushed ingredients within this interact to create a powerfully antiseptic substance of benefit in combating infections in the digestive tract. It appears that this reacts selectively to attack unwanted bacteria whilst leaving beneficial micro-organisms alone.

Lungs and Respiratory System

Once in the blood stream the constituents of the volatile oil pass through the blood vessels of the lungs, through the membranes and are breathed out of the body. This makes garlic a very effective treatment for infections of the respiratory system including deep rooted lung infections.

Cholesterol Build Up

Garlic also contains germanium. This is a healing mineral thought to help control fat deposits in the blood and therefore reduce cholesterol, thus preventing conditions such as angina (a hardening and blocking of the arterial walls). It can also help to prevent thrombosis as it stops large clots forming in the blood vessels.

Some Culinary Uses

Garlic is widely used in the kitchens of Italy, France, Mexico, the Caribbean, South America, the Middle East, India and China. It gives a full-bodied taste to a whole variety of dishes from roasts and stews to sauces and soups. Many chefs feel that, although it can be used widely, garlic and onion are an unnecessary combination as one or the other can provide sufficient flavouring.

Commercially it is widely used as a food flavouring where, as well as standard uses it is found in some unexpected products such as ice cream and sweets as well as chewing gum.

Lavender



Botanical name: *Lavandula officinalis*

Family: *Labiatae*

Part of the plant used: Flowers and tops of stems

Lavenders are a genus of around 25-30 species of flowering plants some of which grow to a metre tall. They are native from the Mediterranean region down into tropical Africa and East into India.

The word Lavender derives from the Latin word *lavare* meaning to wash. It is probable that its spread over much of Europe was due to the Ancient Romans who used the plant to perfume the water in their public baths as well as for medicinal purposes.

Lavender enjoys full Sun and is happiest in sandy, sweet soil. To ensure repeated blooms the plant needs good drainage and soil that has had plenty of compost or manure.

The flowers come out in late June to the end of July and the top of the stalks and flower heads should be harvested as soon as the plant blooms as the oils are at their strongest at this stage.

Lavender oil, derived from the flowers that give the plant its scent, is one of the safest and most versatile herbal substances used for a variety of conditions.

Please note: Lavender oil can cause contractions to strengthen and for this reason its use may be undesirable during all but the final stage of pregnancy.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

Lavender is under the rule of Mercury.

It is said that when rubbed on clothing it will attract love and ward off those predisposed to being cruel.

Some Medicinal Uses

Nerves, Digestion, Depression

An infusion of the flowers may be created and drunk 3 times daily, either before or after meals. This will have the effect of calming the nervous and digestive systems. It will help to temper anxiety, relieve exhaustion and lift depression. It also helps to prevent wind and stomach cramps and can soothe headaches.

Burns And Cuts

The oil may be applied to burns and cuts where it will quicken the healing of the wound and help to prevent scarring as it is a powerful stimulant of cell growth (technically known as a cytophylactc). It is also a powerful antiseptic.

Acne

Lavender oil may also be applied to acne where its antiseptic and healing properties will help to reduce inflammation and help to prevent pock marks.

Sore Throats

The oil may be added to a gargle that can be used twice a day. This will help to reduce swelling, soothe the infected area and attack bacteria.

Headaches

A cold compress applied to the neck or head eases tension. An infusion of the flowers may also be drunk (see above).

Period Pains

The oil, when used during a lower back or abdomen massage, can help to relieve period pains. Do not use this method of relief during pregnancy.

Aromatherapy:

Lavender flowers collected as a posy or placed in a pillow will have a calming, sedative effect and help to induce sleep. For this reason it makes an effective cure for insomnia.

Some Culinary Uses

As well as making a pleasant tea the flower heads can be used in a variety of other ways. You can put them with strawberries or white wine; add the flowers and stalk heads to lemonade and even use them as ice cream flavouring – they go particularly well with vanilla.

Other Uses

Dried lavender flowers kept in a wardrobe or draw will keep moths from laying eggs and prevent damage to linen and woollens. Be sure though that the flowers are changed every few months after they have lost their scent.

Parsley



Botanical name: *Petroselinum crispum*

Family: *Apiaceae*

Part of the plant used: Leaves and stems, oil from the seeds

Parsley is a member of a family of aromatic plants with hollow stems that include carrots, caraway, and fennel as well as the highly toxic plant hemlock.

It is widely used in its flat leafed or curly leafed form for culinary purposes, although the flat leafed variety are higher in essential oils.

Both types grow well in a deep pot on a sunny windowsill along with plenty of water.

Parsley contains volatile oils, flavonoids, proteins, iodine, magnesium, vitamins A, C and E and high levels of iron, and is a benefit to any diet.

Please Note: Parsley should not be used by pregnant women other than for culinary purposes. Infusions should be avoided by those with inflamed kidneys

and it should not be used for curing water retention caused by kidney [11] or heart problems.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

The plant is governed by Mercury. Parsley may be used in purification baths before ritual work. There is a tradition that when in love no longer, eating parsley may have the effect of ending a relationship. When eaten it is supposed to provoke lustfulness and promote fertility.

Some Medicinal Uses

Fevers

Parsley will help to bring down temperatures when used as an infusion.

Diuretic

When taken as an infusion the herb has diuretic properties which can make it useful for the treatment of urinary tract infections. Plenty of water should be drunk alongside to flush out the body's system.

Digestion

Parsley helps digestion and will expel gas and ease stomach pains.

Circulation

Parsley can be a tonic for the circulation and when used in an ointment it has anti-inflammatory properties.

Some Culinary Uses

The herb is used widely in European, American and Middle Eastern cooking. In parts of Europe, as well as West Asia, many foods are served with chopped Parsley sprinkled on top. Its fresh flavour goes particularly well with fish. In Southern and Central Europe it is an ingredient of a *bouquet garni* (a bundle of fresh herbs) used to flavour stocks, soups and sauces. It is also an essential ingredient of several West Asian salads.

Peppermint



Botanical name: *Mentha Piperita*

Family: *Labiatae*

Part of the plant used: Leaves

Peppermint grows to about 60 cms (approximately 2 feet tall). It flowers from July throughout August. In the wild it grows in moist, temperate regions. Various peppermints are native to Europe, Asia, South Africa, South America and Australia. It is also now naturalised in North America.

It is one of the most widely used herbs found in food flavourings and food stuffs of all kinds, perfumes, deodorants, household products, toothpaste and even cigarettes.

In times gone past it was strewn on floors of houses and places of public gathering to keep away insects, mice and rats and mask unpleasant smells.

Today it is perhaps best known for making an excellent drink.

The leaves contain volatile oils, bitters and tannins that act powerfully together. When used with care peppermint can be effective for many uses.

Please Note: Pregnant women should not use the oil of peppermint. In general it should also be used in small quantities as it can cause skin irritation and those with sensitive skin may wish to avoid it altogether. Do not use peppermint in the evening either as an infusion or in oil form as it has a strong stimulating effect that can prevent sleep. When inhaling make sure that care is taken as it can be irritating to the eyes.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

Peppermint is governed by Venus where its cool, calming effects have an obvious affinity with the goddess of Love.

It can be used in spells to ensure safe travel and can also be used to attract positive forces.

Some Medicinal Uses

Digestion

An infusion of the leaves may be created and drunk 3 times daily, either before or after meals. This will have the effect of soothing the nervous and digestive systems and staving off nausea. It also helps to reduce flatulence in the bowel and can be effective in conditions such as colitis.

Fevers

Peppermint can be useful for cold and flu fevers as it helps the body to perspire, bringing down the body temperature and opening up the blood-flow in the skin.

Headaches

A drop of oil on a tissue that is then inhaled can help to relieve headaches. Alternatively a cold compress may be applied either to the neck or head.

Bronchitis and Colds

When added to inhalations a single drop can help relieve congestion. Make sure though that care is taken not to irritate the eyes.

Some Culinary Uses

The leaves make a great tea or can be added to lemonade or lemon juice and water. The young leaves make a good compliment to many desserts and fruits.

Rosemary



Botanical name: *Rosmarinus Officinalis*

Family: *Labiatae*

Part of the plant used: Leaves and stems

Rosemary is native to the Mediterranean area. As well as being a member of the mint family, it is also related to basil, marjoram and oregano. As its Latin name of *Rosmarinus* or “dew of the sea” suggests it is often found by the seashore. Standard varieties grow to around a metre (approximately 3 feet) in height although there are some that grow to twice that. It flowers in late spring producing flowers of white, pale blue or dark blue. Rosemary prefers a sheltered position, well-drained soil and lots of Sun.

Recorded uses of Rosemary go back to 500 BCE where the ancient Greeks and later the Romans used the herb for medicinal and culinary purposes.

Today it is perhaps most famous as a cooking additive, used in a wide variety of roast meat dishes and especially delicious when added to roast potatoes, lamb, beef or rabbit. It is also used as one of the ingredients in eau-de-cologne.

It has many medicinal uses as it is anti-bacterial and anti-oxidant as well as being a strong stimulant, analgesic and tonic.

Please Note: Pregnant women should not use Rosemary because of its powerful stimulative effects; amounts used in cooking are fine. Essential Rosemary oil (not flavoured cooking oils) should never be taken internally as it can be poisonous.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

Rosemary is governed by the Sun and is also under Aries. It is also strongly associated with the midsummer solstice at which time it is said to be at the height of its powers for medicinal and culinary purposes.

Hundreds of years ago the French gave Rosemary the name of *incensier* –that is, incense. Throughout history from the time of the Greeks and Romans it has been used by those who could not afford the more expensive alternatives of frankincense or myrrh.

During ritual occasions it can be burned as a way of cleansing space and ensuring practitioners are protected. For centuries it has been used in bouquets at weddings to keep away harm and as a symbol of fidelity, it is also used to signify true friendship.

Kept under the pillow at night it is said to keep away harmful spirits.

Some Medicinal Uses

In general Rosemary helps prevent depression, apathy and lethargy. It has a powerful stimulating effect ~~on~~ that can help to clarify thoughts and clear the mind.

Poor Circulation

A few drops of essential oil added to a bath help quicken the circulation and speeds the removal of toxins from the body. It can therefore be used effectively on varicose veins, arthritic complaints, muscular stiffness and aches. Those with poor veins should make sure that the bath water is warm and not hot and should also not lie in the water for extended periods as this can make the condition worse.

Easing Flu, Colds and Sinusitis

Used as an inhalation a few drops of essential oil added to hot water help cut through catarrh and allow for clearer breathing.

Stomach Complaints and Menstrual Cramps

Drunk as an infusion of the leaves Rosemary helps prevent flatulence, soothes stomach pains and keeps bowel movements regular. It has an anti-spasmodic action and is a good general tonic for the stomach.

Used in a rub the oil may also help to ease menstrual cramps as it helps relax the uterus.

Hair

When used as a rinse a decoction of Rosemary will make dark hair shiny. It will also help to prevent hair from thinning as it has a stimulating effect on hair follicles. It will also help clear dandruff.

Cancer

There is some indication that Rosemary may be good for helping to prevent cancer. A number of recent studies show that the oil from leaves plant help prevent the development of cancerous tumours in laboratory animals and may have beneficial effects on humans [12].

Some Culinary Uses

Rosemary is delicious on roast lamb, beef and rabbit. It can also be used sparingly in soups and stews. Along with garlic, onion and bay leaves, Italians use it when roasting potatoes.

Sage



Botanical name: *Salvia Officinalis*

Family: *Lamiaceae*

Part of the plant used: Leaves and oil distilled from the whole herb

There are many types of the plant including shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and annuals. It has been cultivated in Europe since civilisation began. The name *Salvia* comes from the Latin *salvere* meaning 'to heal' and there are records going as far back as the Ancient Greeks that tell of its use as a treatment for consumption, ulcers and even snake bites. Romans thought of sage as a sacred herb and supposedly one had to have clean clothes, have washed their feet and made a sacrifice of food before it could be harvested. They believed it to stimulate the mind, memory and senses and also used it as toothpaste.

Astrological Government and Magical Properties

Sage is governed by Jupiter.

Dried and burnt it has been used throughout many different cultures as a way of purifying ritual space. It can be effectively used when performing the Opening of the Temple ceremony or during other times that a circle is cast. It is also a common ingredient of cleansing baths.

Some use it as a background perfume for aiding the calling or summoning of spirits.

Some Medicinal Uses

Coughs

Aromatic sages can be used in teas or tinctures to prevent coughs and are good for the lungs. Species of *Salvia* that are not so aromatic are generally useful anti-inflammatories and can be used for many infections.

Sweating

Common sage drunk as a cold tea will help prevent sweating and yet when drunk hot will produce sweating.

Throat Complaints

Used as an antiseptic gargle (do not swallow) it is a remedy for sore throats, oral thrush, gingivitis and laryngitis.

Menstrual Cramps

When used as a rub it can help period pains and other menopausal problems.

Cuts

Essential oil applied to a wound acts as an astringent that prevents the formation of scar tissue.

Some Culinary Uses

Sage is a good compliment to fatty foods, such as pork, liver, pate and sausages. Sage can also be used for stuffing poultry or pork. In Italy it is used along with bay and rosemary when roasting potatoes and is also used on pizza, foccaccia (a type of bread), gnocchi (small dumplings made from wheat or

potatoes) and pasta dishes. In general, it should be used fairly sparingly as it can have an overwhelming taste.

Research Project

This month why not begin your own herbal book and your own herb garden?

Creating an herbal is a lifetime's work and it's a good idea to find a good quality hardback blank book that will last for many years to record the information. You may even wish to find a book that has a binding that can be undone, which will allow the addition or re-ordering of leaves.

It can be a lovely idea to press specimens of different herbs to be included on the pages. A quick way to press plants is to put a cutting between two leaves of thick blotting paper and place a heavy book on top for a few days. By then the plant should be flattened and ready to glue into the herbal. Alternatively, those that are artistic can go about painting or drawing the herb.

All kinds of information can be recorded: where the herb was found, growing conditions, folkloric and magical information, medicinal and culinary uses etc.

Over time this will be a wonderful resource both for you and your family.

Beginning an herb garden of your own can be easier than you might think. City dwellers that live in high rises could place terracotta pots of plants on a balcony or window ledge. If that isn't possible even in a city there can be many places where it is possible to find wild herbs growing. Once you start to look you will be amazed to find them everywhere. For example, London has an extensive canal system where all manner of herbs can be found growing wild on the banks, even in the centre of the town and of course there are also many parks. However, it should be borne in mind that although herbs can be found along roadsides and wastelands, they may be contaminated by exhaust fumes or buried toxins. It is good idea to find out about the condition of the land where the plants are found, and to avoid those growing in undesirable conditions.

Those that have the space may want to plan out an herb garden. Here it is important to make sure that the right growing conditions for the types of herbs you want to grow are established. Herbs are generally extremely hardy plants and can survive in many conditions where other plants give up the ghost. However, they can also be surprisingly sensitive to correct conditions and will not successfully just grow anywhere. It can be a painful learning curve to see the herbs that you have just brought home from the garden centre full of the promise of wonderful cures and flavourings wither and die within a matter of days.

Check your soil type, gauge the amount of sunshine you get and buy plants accordingly.

A quick word about gathering herbs from the wild. Unless the herb is truly abundant digging up a plant from the wild and transplanting it into your garden is generally frowned upon. Some of them are endangered, and many can be easily decimated. Care should even be taken when harvesting stems and leaves. Look around, how many plants are there, is cutting the herb going to be a problem? It goes without saying that Witches have a strong respect for nature and act accordingly.

Exercises

As you have been learning in the lesson herbs have astrological and magical properties. This makes them perfect for ritual and spell work. The more you find out about them the more you will be able to build up a knowledge base of how they can be effectively incorporated into your lifestyle.

When carrying out this kind of work take into account the astrological properties of the herb. Below is a table that gives a general indication of how herbs may function in this respect.

Herbs of	Uses
Saturn	Can be used when things need to be slowed, issues of reaching a crossroads in life, matters surrounding death.
Jupiter	Can be used when things need to be increased or expanded. Promotes joy. Good for vitality and wealth.
Mars	Can be used for issues of determination, dogged resistance and conflict.
Sun	Good for health, vitality, strength. When one wants to be noticed or glamorous. Issues of pride.
Venus	Issues of love and mentoring.
Mercury	Issues of communication change and speed.
Moon	Psychic matters, feminine health and regulation. But also issues of fickleness, changeability and jealousy.
Earth	Issues of stability, calmness, steadiness.

There now follows a selection of ritual and spell work that will provide some starting points for uses of herbs in Wicca.

Ritual Baths

Over the coming month try taking ritual baths before any magical work is carried out using a variety of essential oils or fresh leaves and flowers. **Remember though that some essential oils can be harmful to pregnant women and that others are not indicated for sensitive skin.**

Experiment with any that take your fancy. Try them alone or in combination. Make sure that you record the herbs you have used and the effects that they have had on you. Some will make you feel invigorated, others calm and dreamy, some may have no noticeable effect at all.

When you have taken the bath try out some magical work that you have tried before. At its conclusion write down in your Book of Shadows how things went and compare it with your record of the time before. How did the work go this time? Have the herbs caused a difference? Was the change positive?

Over time you will build up a useful record of which herbs are useful for you in your magical work.

Look carefully at the herb's astrological associations. Is there a connection between this and the work in hand? Given the planet or star sign the herb is associated with has the effect been what might have been expected? Be honest with yourself though for there might have been no noticeable correspondence at all.

Herbs for Incense and Circle Casting

Try out a variety of herbs as incense to be burnt, remember that they need to be dried first. Over the month experiment and use a variety of herbs for your magical work. Which plants are most effective for clearing psychic space, which are best for casting the circle, which are best for inducing a meditative state, which create excitement and energy that can be channelled into spell and magical work? Also make sure you write down those that you can't stand, those that just made a smoky mess and put ash all over the room and those that lingered unpleasantly in the air. It's a process of trial and error.

Herbal Spell Work

As always it should be remembered that the most effective spells are those that the individual has made for her or himself and for this reason I am not going to give you recipes that you have to slavishly follow. How you use the herbs for this kind of work is up to you. Over the next four weeks think about the spell work that you wish to carry out. Given the list above of astrological properties which herbs would be most appropriate to use. Are you going to use the herb as incense through the casting, will it be merely placed on the altar or within the circle, will it be placed in a posy to be buried or kept on a person?

Healing

A powerful way of using herbs is to combine magical and healing work. If you are preparing a cure for yourself or for others carry out an appropriate spell or ritual to act alongside the infusion, decoction, lotion or rub that you are using. You may be surprised at how effective the two things can be when they work in unison. The herb will directly act on a physical level whilst an accompanying spell will help to focus energy and intention. This is one of the most effective ways of curing that a Witch can perform. As always write down your experiences.

You may wish to share your knowledge on the Magicka School Forum. There is now a “Herb” section which has a board where herbal matters can be posted. This is a wonderful resource for all members and I would be delighted if you feel able to add your comments to it.

End Blessing

Well done, you have now completed the third chapter of the Advanced Course!

Herbalism is a life's work and I have done little more than scratch the surface in this lesson. Hopefully though it will inspire you to use herbs more frequently within your own practice and to learn more about them so that they may help others in need.

I wish you only joy and love as you explore the wonderful world of herbs may these plants be of use in your magical and healing work, bringing health and vitality to all.

As always,

Love and Light,

Blessed Be

Notes

[1] *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2, Scene1, lines 260-5.

[2] This reflects the standard dictionary definition “herb”.

[3] There are some notable exceptions to this, see in particular, *Llewellyn's Herbal Almanac*, Llewellyn 2007 (published annually) and Scott Cunningham, *Cunningham's Encyclopaedia of Magical Herbs*, Llewellyn, 2000 both of which contain astrological information.

[4] See, for example, Nicholas Culpeper, *Complete Herbal and English Physician*, facsimile of the 1826 edition, Magna Books, 1992. The work was originally published in 1653. A free On-line version of the work can be found at <http://www.bibliomania.com/2/1/66/113/frameset.html> . Culpeper (1616-54) was an astrological physicist who set up his practice next door to The Red Lion pub in Spitalfields, London. In most of the plant descriptions in his work there is a section entitled Government and Virtues, which amongst other things details astrological information. Those that are interested can find a biography of the man at <http://www.skyscript.co.uk/culpeper.html> .

[5] Hermes Trismegistus was purportedly the author of the alchemical work, *The Emerald Tablet* in which the phrase can first be found. This was later taken up by the famous physician Paracelsus (1493-1541) who popularised the idea in Renaissance Europe. He was also famous for the idea that “like cures like”, which has importance for the astrological properties of herbs and how they relate to the human body.

[6] The majority of the correspondences in these two tables are based on Nicholas Culpeper, op. cit.. It should be noted such categorisation was never seen as an exact science and it is quite possible to classify some of the above plants differently. Some plants also have two planetary correspondences, such as onion, which is said to have Martian and Earthly characteristics. The planets are given in their magical Kabbalistic order. The Sun and the Moon are considered planets. Neptune, Uranus and Pluto have not been included as they were discovered later than the C17th and have only relatively recently been associated with plants.

[7] Modern herbalists generally agree that Burdock can be effective for some liver complaints and has an inner cleansing action effective for boils and abscesses, which can be caused by the organ working improperly. See Nicola Peterson, *Herbs and Health*, Bloomsbury Books, 1989, p.31, 77, 81.

[8] These tables were mainly based on information contained in Julia and Derek Parker, *Parker's Astrology, The Definitive Guide to Using Astrology in Every Aspect of Your Life*, DK Publishing 2003.

[9] Shakespeare, op.cit., Act 2, Scene 1, lines 260-5.

[10] Nicholas Culpeper, op.cit., p. 66

[11] It is also reputedly high in oxalic acid (see <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/Data/Other/oxalic.html>). This

substance is known to cause the formation of kidney stones. Opinion is divided as to whether Parsley will cause stones to form or whether it can be used to cure them. See, for example, <http://students.ubc.ca/health/questions.cfm?page=6> of the University of British Columbia where it is recommended that Parsley is avoided by those prone to kidney stones or Joannah Metcalfe, *Herbs and Aromatherapy*, Bloomsbury Books, 1993, p. 46 who talks of the herb breaking down kidney stones.

[12] Many readers will be opposed to animal testing but nonetheless one team of scientists, led by Professor Chi-Tang Ho, of the Department of Food Science at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA demonstrated that Rosemary oil applied to the skin of animals reduced their risk of cancer to around half that found in animals that did not receive the oil. In other studies by the research team, animals whose diets contained some rosemary oil had about half the incidence of colon cancer or lung cancer compared with animals not eating Rosemary. Those that are interested may find a page on the Professor at <http://foodsci.rutgers.edu/ho/index.htm>.

Chapter Four: Studying Further the Art of Magic

Studying Further the Art of Magic

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will learn about:

Advanced magical techniques.

Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete.

There are also further magical exercises for you to work on.

You will next find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Further Magical Theory

In *Wicca Revealed* you learnt the basics of magic. Most importantly the lesson focussed on the importance of the will and imagination, creating calm and still space, and using magic as part of an overall strategy to achieve an end. At the risk of seeming over insistent, those that wish to practice effective magic should strive to be completely comfortable and familiar with all these skills before embarking on the things that will be learnt this lesson. The main reason Witches, or magicians, fail at magic is because they have paid insufficient attention to the fundamentals.

The practice of magic is at heart about using thought to effect an action; in Crowley's words "Every intentional act is a magickal act" [1]. It may seem as a ridiculous example to give, but, in this sense, making a cup of tea is a magical operation. One imagines a nice hot drink, an intention is set and appropriate action is then taken to bring it into reality. We take the ability to do this for granted – it's mundane and commonplace and we don't regard it as magical at all. But we are forgetting that our lives *are* magical, even at the most basic level. To have the aptitude to will something and make it happen is an extraordinary and special thing, whatever the intention. And it is an ability that we all have and can build upon. When stripped to its basics the only difference between making a cup of tea and using magic to influence the whole world is merely a question of scale of influence. Many will, of course, find this hard to accept.

Another difficult idea in magic is the concept of limitations. Witches and magicians tend to perceive reality a little differently from most people and often see that there is no such thing as an objective truth outside of our perception and that, therefore, all things may well be true and possible [2].

To all intents and purposes reality is nothing more than we observe it to be.

Most people base their notions of what is possible on the knowledge of what has gone before. In some senses this is a fallacy, for every second of our lives we enter new territory and every second new possibilities arise. Who can say whether a thing that was impossible to do yesterday, will be impossible today or tomorrow? Who can say where, precisely, a limitation lies? [3]

Another idea strongly connected to this is the concept of shifting magical paradigms. This is not as difficult to understand as it sounds. A paradigm is a framework within which to see something. It doesn't alter the outside world so much as alter our perceptions of what is possible. To give a very simplistic example; whether we regard a glass as half full or half empty matters not at all to the glass, but it matters greatly to us and has a profound effect on what actions we are able to take. The more positive viewpoint, for example, encourages a feeling of plenty and might lead one to share and reinforce friendship with others, whereas the negative standpoint will encourage just the opposite. Although this is a terribly simplistic illustration it should be noted that these shifts in perception really do matter.

A skilled Witch or magician will often sWitch from one magical system to another in a bid to look at things in different ways and perceive different possibilities and methods of action. Some Witches are therefore adept at a variety of magical systems and it is not unusual to find those who practice Enochian, Thelemic and Chaos magic to a high standard and are quite capable of comfortably shifting from one system to another. However, this is widely acknowledged as a lifetime's work and, although the seeds may be laid quite early on in a Witch's career, acquiring any real level of skill in these complex systems is only something generally achieved many years after the three Wiccan Degrees. It is mentioned here merely as an open door to greater magical possibilities that one may want to walk through at a later stage.

To Know, To Will, To Dare, To Remain Silent

The skills necessary for magical working can be summed up in the phrase "To know, to will, to dare, to remain silent" [4]. These are known as the "Powers of the Sphinx" and have been seen to be one of the keys to working magic [5]. Each phrase is explained in turn:

To Know

Gnothi Seaton [6] (Know Thyself) were the two words famously inscribed above the doorway to the Temple at Delphi and from time immemorial it has been a basic requisite of mystical and magical training.

Knowing oneself is one of the hardest things to achieve, as we are often capable of surprising ourselves. For example, at Magicka School the administration team often gets emails from students who say things like "I didn't know I had it in me to..." or "I never thought I'd be able to...." This is entirely positive for it shows that such people are open to possibilities within themselves that they didn't know were there previously. Many of us are much more capable of things than we allow ourselves to believe and a limited belief in one's ability affects imagination as well as the will, which in turn affects the amount and quality of magic that can be worked. Just as it is important to know our limitations in life, it is also important to know just how much we can really accomplish.

Knowing one's True Path is one of the first duties of those that would practice magic.

Everybody has a purpose in life, whether they know it or not; everyone has a course to run. Some identify by an early age what they should do in life, whereas others haven't worked out their purpose until their seventies. However, when this realisation hits matters little, for when you know what direction to go, you can then take action to achieve what you want and reach an aspiration much quicker than you might anticipate. There are many inspiring stories of those who have achieved goals in life (even later in their years) because they knew what it was they wanted to do.

The identification of a purpose is a crucial thing to achieve; for once one has knowledge of their course they are able, consciously or not, to align themselves with the forces of the Universe. Ever wondered why some things just seem to flow for you? It is because you are moving in harmony with Life. Similarly, when

nothing seems to go right it is because there is discord. Fortunately humans have the intellectual capability to change their thoughts and thus their actions. By behaving differently, the alignment with the Universe can be found again.

Quite literally everything on Earth, at any given point, has been created by the whole of existence. You are a product of everything that has ever been, without it you would not exist, and because you are its child you must act in accordance with it to be successful. This is perhaps easier said than done though, for it requires knowing what actions to take. Sometimes these just seem to instinctively be done but other times they are the result of much trial and error. A Witch must strive to comprehend the moment that they are in now to its fullest extent. What exactly is the situation in the present moment, what is the relationship between x and y, what resources are available, etc? They are then in a better position to cause change to happen through the correct manipulation of forces. It is for this reason that a record is kept of all that a Witch does towards achieving an end. This record reveals what has been tried, what works and what needs to be done differently.

To Will

Enough has been said of the will in *Wicca Revealed*, but for those who have not taken that course, it should be stated that will is really nothing more than imagining something and setting a goal towards which action can be taken. The goal need not be immediately realistic but it is terribly important that you are genuinely 100% convinced that you can achieve it and 100% convinced that you want it. Cliché as it may be, you will find that where there is a will there is a way.

To Dare

This concept involves everything so far stated. To achieve something often means that you need to have the courage to do it. To dare to believe that you are worth more (in any sense), or can alter a situation for yourself or others, is one of the most profound, courageous and life changing things that you can do, as long as it is accompanied by taking steps to put such a belief into action.

To Remain Silent

Perhaps this should read "knowing when and when not to speak". Too often we become so keen for our desires that the first thing we do is go and blab about them to our friends. This is not necessarily a good thing. Sometimes "friends" will place obstacles in front of our path by casting doubts, or posing awkward questions. It can be one of the most energy draining experiences to hear someone you have regard for say words to the effect of "You can't possibly do that". Often people have a way of imposing their own fears and limitations onto others. And even if the Witch is strong-willed it nonetheless takes extra energy to keep a desire in mind.

This is not to say that friends will always react in an unsupportive way and sometimes discussing desires with others can bring nothing but constructive help. But it is difficult to decide when it is a good time to speak and often Witches prefer to remain silent about their work. In any case voicing goals to others can also have the effect of dissipating enthusiasm in that it releases an intention into the material world. As you have learnt in *Wicca Revealed* the best place to free the will for something to happen is into a state of nothingness, for there all is calm and magic can quickly be worked.

Much of the above sounds like it was lifted from a book that could be called "How to Win Friends and Make Lots of Money". And this is not surprising for the same kinds of techniques are indeed being employed. There is little difference, in fact, between some modern self-help or business techniques and the art of magic. The main difference lies in an emphasis that Witches have on spirituality above all else and specific magical practices, to which we will now turn our attention.

The rest of the main part of this lesson is devoted to giving you a range of skills with which to experiment and advance your magical practice. As in *Wicca Revealed*, everything that is taught will be safe. It is important though to follow the instructions exactly and at all times to have the utmost respect for the Art.

Sex Magic

Nothing makes conservative minds more horrified than the phrase "sex magic", presumably as it conjures up images of Satanic orgies and abuse used to achieve the most perverted of ends. Indeed this is the one aspect of Wicca, and

the magical world in general, that is most often salaciously dragged through the tabloid press. It seems many enjoy reading about such things, thrilling with a sense of outrage and excitement.

As is usually the case though, sex magic has been blown out of all recognition by certain sections of the media and some religious organisations that have a vested interest in demonising Wiccans.

Witches are not embarrassed of, or ashamed by the subject of sex. It is seen as being perfectly normal and enjoyable and as something that should be celebrated and venerated. After all, without it no human would exist. We owe our lives to sex and for some this seems to be a difficult thing to swallow.

Further, most Witches would agree that sexual relations should only take place between those who are mature and within the bounds of a loving relationship [7] - the vast majority of Witches are monogamous and faithful to their partners.

Perhaps the main difference between Witches' views on this subject and large sections of the society that they live in is that Witches see that sex is a powerful way to make magic. As far as magical practice is concerned, sex has much the same effect on the mind and the body as chanting and dancing. That is, it stimulates and raises large amounts of energy and at the same time has a calming effect on the mind. Indeed, at the point of orgasm the mind tends to completely forget itself.

As was taught in *Wicca Revealed* the most important thing that can be done when working magic is to reach the point of nothingness, the point at which the idea of self no longer exists. For it is here that a direct connection to the Divine can be established. This is the place from which all things arise, from where all things come to pass.

The Witch or magician strives to reach this state for here is the best place to work magic. When an intention or will for something to happen is cast into this void it travels quickly through the state of non-being into fruition; much more quickly than if it were let loose into the physical world with all its distractions and clutter.

The act of sex and, most specifically, the orgasm, provides one of the easiest ways to reach the required state of mind.

Ideally, this kind of magic is best worked with partners of opposite sex who have the same intention. This is for reasons of female/male polarity. However

there is no reason why it cannot be achieved through all male or all female coupling or even through masturbation [8], although it is generally agreed that the efficacy will be less.

Like all things magical, sex magic takes practice. Here the difficulty is concentrating on the intention through an orgasm and releasing it at the correct time. Most people find this extremely difficult to achieve, primarily because the magical intention may simply not be very sexy or completely incongruous to the love-making.

That said, once mastered, this technique of magic is probably the most powerful there is. Great care should be used in setting an intention for this method. As always do not will things for others without their consent and knowledge and never use it for negative means.

Below is a suggested method for working sex magic:

- Prepare yourself for the act, you may wish to take a ritual bath.
- Cast a circle.
- Relax the mind and body through a favoured relaxation technique.
- Attain sexual arousal.
- Prolong this state for around half an hour to sixty minutes.
- Visualise the intended outcome of the magical working.
- Reach orgasm; release the intention into the space.
- Express gratitude for the fulfilment of your wish or desire, either mentally or out loud.

As a footnote to this subject I would add that Wiccans have a ritual called the Great Rite that is often symbolically worked into various ceremonies. Indeed, on one level, what else is the use of the athame and chalice in the Opening of the Temple, other than a symbolic sexual act? There is also an actual Great Rite that takes place between partners and in private. There will be more on this in a future chapter.

Use of the Scourge

In many religions throughout history flagellation has been fairly commonplace. Its use stretches as far back as the cults of Isis in Ancient Egypt and Dionysus in Ancient Greece. It was used on women during the Lupercalia festival in Rome to ensure fertility, as well as the large temple ceremonies of the Ancient Jews. During the late medieval period in Europe flagellants formed part of a great Christian radical movement that was later to be declared heretical. The practice of flagellation still continues to this day in some Catholic Mediterranean countries as well as in the Philippines during Lent. Other practitioners include Shiite Muslims and a number of Taoists who whip women and spank men in their temples at the Chinese New Year.

Often flagellation is carried out until the point of considerable self harm and the cutting of the body. Perhaps needless to say, Wiccans do not engage in such extreme activity. The scourge is used only for gentle stimulation of the blood flow to the back, where it serves to help excite the mind of the Witch. Energy is thus raised and can be used as part of creating a sense of frenzy along with using chants or dancing. Perhaps rather strangely this state has the effect of producing a kind of calm space. By raising personal power, excitement reaches a high point and it becomes possible to forget oneself, and one's everyday worries and concerns. Although the mind and body are highly stimulated, there is, nonetheless, a kind of stillness created into which an intention can be cast.

Talismans and Amulets

A talisman can be considered to be an object specially created or adapted for a specific magical purpose. Whereas an amulet is a type of talisman made for the purposes of protection.

A Witch aims to construct a talisman that symbolises an intention precisely, as well as the person or persons that the intention is for. These creations can take a whole variety of forms and include, but are not limited to, rings, carved stones, symbols on parchment, dolls etc. Most commonly they are to be found in the possession of the general public as a rabbit's foot or a St Christopher necklace kept for "luck" or "protection". Such vague notions and poorly symbolic objects are not generally what a Wiccan would use.

For them, a talisman is specifically made for a purpose and often combines symbols from a variety of sources. These may derive from Astrology, the Kabbalah, Alchemy, Numerology (especially magical squares), magickal tradition (*The Key of Solomon* for example), as well as various religions and cults (Hinduism, Cult of Isis) etc. Good sources for such symbols and correspondences include Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* and especially Crowley's 777 [9], which has vast tables on all manner of magical things.

These symbols are combined into a magical formula. A formula is basically a set of symbols showing the constituents of an intention. There are no hard and fast formulae for a particular result and Witches will prefer to make up their own based on what they understand as being efficacious. No difficulty is perceived in this for there are many different ways to achieve any given outcome depending on the circumstances surrounding an issue.

An example of a talisman is given below:



This one was made on a computer, and printed off onto a quality paper but it could have just as effectively been made through drawing or painting.

It was designed to aid focussing the mind on writing successfully and the symbols are all in alignment with this desire.

On the left is the first pentacle of Mercury from *The Key of Solomon the King* [10], which is designed to evoke the aid of spirits helpful to communication and speed.

Next is a flame symbolising desire and the light within.

Following are the symbols for Venus in Aries, which, according to Golden Dawn tradition, amounts to "perfected work" (for Crowley it was "perfection").

And lastly, there is an image of Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom, writing and communication.

It will be noted that the mix of icons is eclectic. This is not seen as a problem; in this area of Wicca and symbols can be blended together for great effect. Think, for example, of the rich tapestry of images drawn on in Tarot cards.

Having been created, the talisman is then kept securely on the person until the desired effect has been achieved.

This branch of magical practice is often widely criticised on grounds that it is little more than sympathetic magic, that is, it is based on the idea that an effect can be created by imitating it [11]. Here critics see that the symbols are intended as imitations of certain effects. But this is way too simplistic a criticism. The act of drawing out symbols and the symbols themselves are not what create the magic. As I have been careful to point out at all stages, magic takes place initially within the mind. The symbols act deeply on the conscious and unconscious aspects of our psyche and help in fixing intentions and taking the required action to achieve a goal. When correctly viewed in this way it is obvious what a potentially powerful effect they have on behaviour and the world [12].

Amulets

Amulets have been used throughout history to protect both the living and the dead. By the former they are either worn or carried, whereas the deceased have them placed in the clothing or placed upon them as jewellery.

By the living these have been used in many diverse cultures, most notably to protect the wearer from the "Evil Eye". This is a vague notion that others, whether from the material or spirit world, are somehow wishing harm on an individual. That such a concept is commonplace is evidenced by etymology; the Ancient Greeks had the term *baskania*, the Romans called it *oculus facinus*, in present day Italy it is *mal occhio*, in India *drishtidosham*, in France *mauvais oeil* and so on [13]. Modern Witches generally [14] disassociate themselves from such naïve and indistinct superstitions and will instead seek to examine in detail why they, or an individual they are working for, feel somehow under attack and then go about finding a way to remedy the situation.

As for the dead, amulets historically have often been used as protection from worms, mildew and putrefaction, as well as to protect the soul on its journey in the Underworld [15]. Modern Witches will make use of amulets for those who have passed and these can be used as an embodiment of a desire that the soul of

the deceased find its way in the afterlife. They do not believe that such objects have an effect on the processes of decay.

Wiccans use amulets from many different sources and a number of common ones are given in the table below.

Symbol	Origin	Purpose
Ankh 	Ancient Egypt	Surprisingly perhaps, the meaning of this symbol is unclear [16]. Every Ancient Egyptian goddess and god is found with it in their possession and it is obviously an extremely important symbol. Some have thought it to be phallic in origin and it is generally supposed to mean "Life" and give protection over it.
Utchat or Eye of Horus 	Ancient Egypt	Horus was a Sun god, who, in his Osiris aspect, also represented the Moon. The amulet was generally used to ensure strength, vigour, safety, good health and protection.
Amulet of the Soul 	Ancient Egypt	This gave protection to the soul in its wanderings in the Underworld and was believed to have helped ensure that the <i>Ka</i> (soul) met with its body (the mummy) in the afterlife. When used by Witches today it would have the meaning of aiding the soul in its journey to the Summerlands.

Symbol	Origin	Purpose
Blue beads with eyes 	Near East, Turkey, Greece	These are very popular symbols and are to be found all over the world as they are brought in by immigrant populations. In London and New York for example they are commonly seen in restaurants run by Turks, Greeks or Southern Italians. These are used as general protection against the "Evil Eye". Witches, however, will only use them against specific and defined threats and often in combination with other symbols.
Polished Horse Brasses 	UK	Highly reflective objects are also commonly thought to avert the "Evil Eye". And, as above, Witches will only really make use of such objects when a threat has been examined.
<i>Mano cornuta</i> 	Uncertain but found widely in Europe	The <i>mano cornuta</i> is for Witches the sign of the Horned God. In many cultures it is a symbol of protection, again typically against the "Evil Eye". It is also a sign that one has been the victim of an unfaithful partner and can be considered quite offensive in Spain and Italy depending on the context of use.

Symbol	Origin	Purpose
<i>Mano in fica</i>	Uncertain but found widely in Europe	The <i>mano in fica</i> can be used by Witches to represent the Goddess. <i>Fica</i> means fig, but it can also refer to the female genitalia. Again, commonly it can be a symbol of protection, however great care should be exercised with its use in Spain and Italy where it can be thought of as unspeakably rude (in Italian the word <i>fica</i> is considered as rude as the English "C" word). It is made by making a fist and placing the thumb between the second and ring finger.

Poppets and Wax Images

From time immemorial poppets and wax images have been used to aid or harm others. Wiccans use such objects solely for good purposes and only with the foreknowledge and permission of the intended recipient.

A poppet is a small figure, often made from cloth, wire, straw or even pieces of wood, whereas a wax doll can be carved from a candle, or block of wax, or made using a purpose built mould. A Witch will only make a figurine of the person who has come to them for help, they will not make one of somebody else as this interferes in another's destiny.

A model is constructed and then manipulated depending on the desired result. Precisely what is done to the figure will depend on any given situation and is again left to the imagination of the individual Witch. Spells and incantations may be said over them and they may also be clothed or put with certain objects that symbolise an intended outcome. Surprisingly to some, they are rarely stuck with pins or other sharp objects for fear of hurting the person.

Poppets and wax dolls are commonly used to help effect cures for a variety of ailments and to assist success in things such as careers, relationships, friendships, love and marriage [17].

They may or may not be given to the person on whose behalf the magical work is being undertaken, depending on the outcome intended and the nature of the agreement with the Witch.

Again such practices are often misunderstood as nothing more than sympathetic magic but these effigies are surprisingly powerful psychological tools, for when a person believes they will work the intended result often comes about. It should be noted well that they should only ever be used for good purposes. Used incorrectly these can quite literally injure and even kill [18].

Evocation of Spirits

For the sake of completeness I mention this subject here. However, for reasons of safety, methods for conjuring such entities will not be given. In ancient magical works spirits are usually considered as being external and separate beings from the Witch or magician. However, these days they are often considered as being part of the conjurer's psyche made manifest so that it can be worked with. This is seen as being part of the endeavour to gain knowledge and experience of oneself on a spiritual journey to Union with the Divine.

Such techniques of mind control can be difficult and are best learnt under the close supervision of someone adept in the practice. They are not really suitable for an on-line course as there can be many dangers and pitfalls to summoning up such things and some may find the experience profoundly disturbing [19]. In fact, many Witches avoid evocation all together and leave it to traditions where the art is quite commonplace (such as Alexandrians) or to magicians (for example, within the Golden Dawn tradition) who often evoke spirits.

It should be noted as well that evocation differs from invocation in that in the former, spirits, who are perceived as being lesser life forms than the Witch or magician, are evoked into a specially created triangle outside of the circle. This contrasts with Invocation where beings of an equal or superior nature (like Archangels or the Goddess and God) are respectfully invited within the circle.

Magic of Contagion

Briefly stated, magic of contagion is a belief where whatever is done to a material object will affect the person with whom the object was once in close proximity.

A Witch will often ask for a personal item, such things can include clothing, jewellery or a lock of hair [20], preference being given to the latter in that it was actually part of the person. The object can then form the basis of spell work, or be combined with making a poppet or placed with other objects of a relevant symbolic meaning.

Consecration of Objects Used in Magic

Talismans, amulets and objects gathered for working magic should be properly consecrated. This has the effect of aligning the Witch's mind with the item as well as affecting it positively on its other levels of existence. Ideally this should be done within a properly constructed circle.

Place the object to be consecrated on the pentacle and lay your dominant hand over it. Intone words to the effect of:

"I consecrate this_____ in the element of Earth."

Sprinkle the item with salty water from the chalice. Say:

"I consecrate this_____ in the name of Water."

Pick up the object and pass it through the incense, as you do so chant:

"I consecrate this_____ in the element of Air."

Finally pass the item through the altar candle flames (taking care not to burn a flammable item) and say:

"I consecrate this_____ in the element of Fire and in the names of the Goddess and God (substitute the Goddess and God names you prefer here)" [21].

The object(s) so consecrated should then be left on the altar until the circle is taken down.

Research Project

This chapter there are two research projects for you to complete.

One

There is much that hasn't been looked at in these lessons in magic; much, therefore, for the student to go away and explore for themselves. An obvious consideration not touched upon at all has been when best to practice the art. Some Witches believe that the times should be governed by astrological considerations and make a detailed study of when the conditions are most conducive for a particular effect. Others work primarily to the rhythm of the Moon and weave their magic to the tune of its waxing and waning cycle. Still others will perform certain acts when they judge the "vibes" to be right. Over the coming month begin to decide for yourself which approach is the right one for you. Have a go at some of the magical techniques outlined in the lesson and see what works best at what times. Be sure to keep a detailed record in your Book of Shadows or Book of Mirrors for this way it will become obvious when things function best.

Two

We have looked briefly at the construction of talismans and the kinds of symbolism that may be used. Magic squares and numerology are firm favourites for inclusion in this type of work. Over the next few weeks find out all you can about planetary squares. As you will learn, each planet has its own set of numerical correspondences. What do you think these numbers signify and what is their practical application in magic? Take care to research these well as often authors end up repeating each others' mistakes for generations in the construction of the squares that should add up precisely to certain numbers.

Related to this project is the subject of numerology in general and those that are keen will also delve into this interesting area of the occult. A useful project to undertake is the converting of your Witch name into a numerical sequence that can be used as a kind of cipher on a talisman.

Exercises

Using a Variety of Pentagrams

In *Wicca Revealed* you learnt to use an invoking and banishing Pentagram of Earth. For general magical work this is considered the safest to use as the energies worked with are the most stable. However, there are in fact a variety of pentagrams that can be used depending on the nature of the work in hand.

Elemental Pentagrams

The use of Elemental pentagrams in Wicca derives directly from the Golden Dawn's *Ritual of the Pentagram* [22].

Previously you learnt that the points of the pentagram are attributed to Spirit, Air, Earth, Fire and Water. The easiest way to remember this is that they run in alphabetical order around the symbol:



You invoke a pentagram of a particular element by making the initial movement in its direction and banishing away from it:

To invoke the Pentagram of Air



To banish the Pentagram of Air



To invoke the Pentagram of Earth



To banish the Pentagram of Earth



To invoke the Pentagram of Fire



To banish the Pentagram of Fire



To invoke the Pentagram of Water



To banish the Pentagram of Water



To invoke the Pentagram of Spirit [23]



To banish the Pentagram of Spirit



Which pentagram is used will depend on the individual's understanding of the forces to be used and how they correlate with the desired results. As a general rule though, a Pentagram of Spirit is used much less than those of the Four Elements and this is because "Spirit" is an ultimate, all powerful resource that should be used sparingly on the grounds that it doesn't make sense to crack a nut with a sledge hammer.

Other Pentagrams

Pentagrams can also be used for meditation work where their interconnected points provide a way of seeing how things may be related.

In the Faery Tradition, for instance, the Iron Pentagram [24] is used as a meditation on Sex, Power, Pride, Passion and Self. The Witch lies down on the ground and visualises that their limbs correspond to these forces. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and then worked on to create a more balanced whole.



Another common way of using the pentagram is to see that it represents the stages of life [25]. The Witch works with the points by visualising the different stages of their existence in the past, present and future. This helps create a sense

of self and unity across time, as well as encouraging the Witch to take ownership of their being and be the prime mover in their life.



Over the coming month it is a good idea to experiment with visualising, drawing and making the pentagrams with a wand or athame to see which are most useful for different magical arts. Only practice will tell and there are no hard and fast rules.

Reviewing your Magical Practice

In *Wicca Revealed*, many lessons ago, there was a ten point plan for effecting magic. Take a few moments now to re-read it and then annotate the things that you have done and highlight the things that you have not. Be honest with yourself. How many of these basic requirements have you actually mastered and how many still need working on?

Here is the list:

1. Before magical practice can begin in earnest it must be possible for the practitioner to be able to meditate for one whole minute without the mind wandering. Without this most basic of skills little true success can be expected.

2. Realise that magic is part of a strategy; it is a very important constituent but that is all. With only flour you can't bake a cake.
3. Set intentions very carefully. They must be things that carry a 100% conviction and are driven by absolute determination. They should be visualised strongly and in detail.
4. Never ever wish harm on another. Always bear in mind the Wiccan Rede: "An' it harm none, do what thou wilt."
5. As a general rule make sure magic you do for others has their consent.
6. Review intentions and strategies regularly. Change things that don't work and try something else. Keep a record of what works and doesn't. Remain flexible but stay focused on the intention if you still believe in its validity. Remember that often to achieve something large many small steps must be taken.
7. Start small; practice magic to achieve little things to start with and allow confidence to grow.
8. Experiment with a variety of ways of making magic. Find which ways suit best. Trial and error can only be used here.
9. Study the Kabbalah, Astrology, alchemy and herbs. All can be used to build up a knowledge base of correspondences which will be very helpful in all kinds of magical work.
10. Give thanks to the Goddess and the God when desired results are achieved.

How many of these have you achieved or do you practice regularly?

If you are able to do them all and have built upon them then you will have noticed that you are much more in control of your life, and that magic is being worked not only for yourself but for those around you. I am willing to bet that life has become fuller and much more enjoyable as a result; if not then you need to go back to this plan and put further work in.

In general the most common failings in magic centre around number six, the reviewing of a magical strategy. This demands a regular updating of intentions and modification of an overall plan. Often people map this out quite carefully to start with but then fail to put in the necessary updating. All that can be said to this is that it is crucial; if you don't constantly pilot your ship it will waver off course. The only real way to succeed in this is to put dates in your diary when you will

review your magical strategy and then stick to them. Try it just for one month with a weekly review. Just keep things going for four weeks and you will see results that will hopefully inspire you further.

End Blessing

Well done; you have now completed the fourth lesson of the *Advanced Course*!

The things you have learnt this lesson will help to broaden your magical practice. There are new techniques that must now be mastered; both sex magic and the use of talismans are particularly powerful and, when used with care, have the potential to do many good things.

I wish you success in your magical endeavours and may they always bring you joy and happiness.

As always,

Love and Light

Blessed Be

Notes

[1] Aleister Crowley, *Magick*, edited, annotated and introduced by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant, Guild Publishing, 1986, p.132

[2] This is based on one of the main tenets of Chaos Magic and is the real meaning of the phrase "Nothing is true and everything is permitted". This is attributed to Hassan I Sabbah, an eleventh century Persian, was used by Friedrich Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and adopted by Chaos Magicians in the twentieth century.

[3] On this point see Crowley, *Ibid.* p.134.

[4] This phrase is first referred to in occult literature in the mid nineteenth century; see Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, Bracken Books, 1995, p37.

[5] Most famously by Aleister Crowley, who refers to them in *Liber Aleph, The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, Weiser, 1991, Chapter 152.

[6] The words have been attributed to Thales (c624 BCE-546 BCE), one of the Seven Wise Men of Ancient Greece.

[7] Please note: in no way is sexual activity below the legal age of consent being encouraged or condoned and it should be added that sex magic is best practiced by those in a stable relationship.

[8] Aleister Crowley was a famous exponent of this method although it is often misunderstood (even today) as advocating child sacrifice. The relevant line reads "He [Crowley] made this particular sacrifice on an average about 150 times every year ..." Many have been only too happy to conclude the darkest things from this phrase when, in fact, the only sacrifice being made was of sperm during masturbation. Aleister Crowley, *Magick*, edited, annotated and introduced by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant, Guild Publishing, 1986, p. 219.

[9] Aleister Crowley, *777 and other Qabalistic Writings*, Weiser 1986. Please note that excellent though the book is, some disagreement exists in the magical world over some of the correspondences. The work is probably best used as a starting point.

[10] S.L. MacGregor Mathers, trans., *The Key of Solomon the King (Clavicula Salomonis)*, Weiser, 1990, p.77

[11] This is often based on comments made in the late nineteenth century by Sir James Frazer in his monumental work, *The Golden Bough*, where he states that the

"magus infers... he can produce any effect he desires merely by imitating it" and "magic is a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive act." See *The Golden Bough, A History of Myth and Religion*, Chancellor Press, one volume edition, 2000, p10.

[12] In support of this consider the world of advertising. Millions upon millions of pounds are often poured into producing specific product logos (commonly referred to as symbols) that help to induce certain behaviours and specific buying patterns in individuals. And logos aren't even true symbols in the Jungian definition of the word where a symbol is "a term, a name or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning...it has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the scope of reason", C. G. Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, Picador, 1989, pp.3-4.

[13] See Doreen Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft*, p. 111-112, Hale 1986.

[14] Some Witches can be found who will speak of unclear forces; generally though, the Craft tries hard not to encourage superstition for the simple reason that it is disempowering.

[15] The Ancient Egyptians apparently made extensive use of amulets for this purpose, see the chapter on amulets in E. A. Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, Arkana 1988, p.25-64

[16] See Budge, op. cit., p. 58.

[17] Please note: A qualified medical practitioner should always be consulted first when someone is ill.

[18] This may seem dramatic but when an individual has a strong belief that a poppet or wax doll has been made with harmful intent, injury or death can ensue. That this comes about is probably due to psychological effects and its potency should not be underestimated. History is littered with such casualties.

[19] Wiccan author Vivianne Crowley tells an amusing tale on the lecture circuit about her first experiences of such things using a billiard table triangle as the space to conjure a spirit and an entity that ended up possessing her dog. Funny as this may be, it serves to highlight that evocation is best practiced by those that know what they're doing. There are certainly many stories of those who have

exacerbated mental conditions or descended into depression through such acts of dabbling.

[20] In sensational occult literature nail clippings are often advocated, presumably for an added disgust factor. Whilst it is possible to work magic of contagion with these, most Witches would rather use hair.

[21] This has been adapted for solitary practice from the consecration ceremony in Janet and Stewart Farrar, *A Witches' Bible*, Phoenix Publishing Inc, 1996, II, p.48.

[22] See Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, Llewellyn, 2003, pp. 280-286.

[23] I have given my own version for invoking the Pentagram of Spirit. The Golden Dawn, on the other hand, had two ways of invoking and banishing this pentagram:

Version One

Invoking Pentagram of Spirit (Golden Dawn)



Banishing Pentagram of Spirit (Golden Dawn)



Version Two

Invoking Pentagram of Spirit (Golden Dawn)



Banishing Pentagram of Spirit (Golden Dawn)



The reasons for this are complex and are rooted in the Order's philosophies and system of magic. Those that want to find out more should consult Regardie, *Ibid*.

[24] See Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, Harper San Francisco, 1989, pp.79-80.

[25] Those that have consulted Starhawk's *Spiral Dance* will find a similar pentagram of life on P.80. The one given here differs in that the stages of life follow the properties of the Elements. Thus, in this version, Birth corresponds to Air, Initiation to Earth, Consummation to Fire, Repose/ Death to Water and ruling over all is Spirit. There are of course other arrangements that will work and the individual can find their own correspondences should they so wish.

Chapter Five: The Kabbalah and Magic

The Kabbalah and Magic

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will learn about:

The Kabbalah and its importance to magic.

Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete.

There are also further magical exercises for you to work on.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Introduction

You will have no doubt noticed that there is an emphasis on the Kabbalah throughout my publications and this is entirely deliberate. Far from being a trendy New Age philosophy made well known by celebrities, the Kabbalah has for centuries underpinned Western Magical practice. Without a solid foundation in its mysteries a Witch or a magician is left without a comprehensive structure within which to operate and, perhaps even worse, is ignorant of why magical practice is the way that it is. This matters, because nearly everything in magic relies on correspondences and these are governed by the framework of the Kabbalah.

In this lesson I have only space to give you the basics; it will provide a way in to studying the Kabbalah but little more. For those serious about magic I would advise that the *Introduction to the Magician's Kabbalah* course is taken at www.magickaschool.com as the 12 lessons it contains provide a much more comprehensive overview.

What is the Kabbalah?

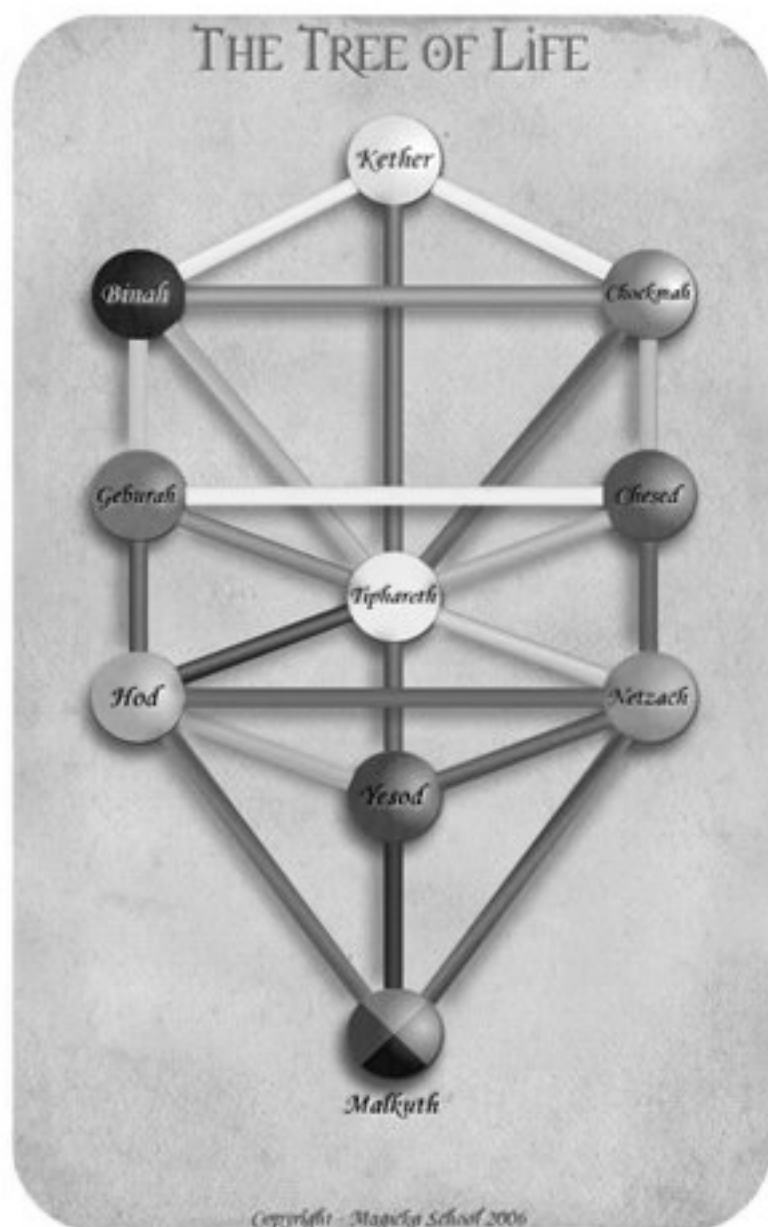
Whole volumes are written about this single topic and this is hardly surprising as both its history and its ideas can be incredibly complicated. However, you will no doubt be pleased to hear that you can absorb its basics quite readily.

The word Kabbalah derives from Hebrew and, as there is no agreed spelling in English, you will find it spelt variously as Kabbalah, Cabala, Cabalah, Qabalah and Q'bala. Different authors give different definitions of the word and often you will come across either “mouth to ear” or “to receive”. Both point to the fact that it was originally an oral tradition.

The Kabbalah is a collection of ancient Hebrew teachings that have an uncertain origin but are likely to be at least around 2000 years old [1]. Its ideas seem to have entered Europe around the Thirteenth Century CE [2] and quickly became adopted by some notable Renaissance figures, perhaps the most famous of which was Pico della Mirandola [3]. Its writings have had a profound effect on religious thinking and magic since then. The Kabbalah was heavily influential on the writings of Henry Cornelius Agrippa, whose *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* [4] became one of the mainstays of Golden Dawn magic and theory [5], which in turn has underpinned parts of Wiccan practice [6].

At heart the Kabbalah is a way of seeing existence that shows the order and relationship of all things from the Divine to the mundane.

Although it is often seen that there are four parts to Kabbalistic practice the only one that need concern us at present [7] is the *Unwritten Kabbalah*, which centres on the mighty glyph of the Tree of Life [8].



As can be seen from the diagram, the Tree consists of what appear to be ten spheres and 22 lines. The sphere shapes are known collectively as Sephiroth (singular Sephira) and the lines as paths. The Sephiroth can also be termed paths, making a total of 32 altogether.

Although they are often shown diagrammatically as spheres, the best way to think of a Sephira is as an expression of a type of energy or as an “emanation”.

The names of the Sephira from the top of the diagram are:

Kether

Chockmah

Binah

Chesed

Geburah

Tiphareth

Netzach

Hod

Yesod

Malkuth

Kether is an expression of energy analogous to the Divine, whilst Malkuth is the solid everyday world that we appear to live in. The other Sephira represent everything in between. Each has particular qualities and certain things that are attributed to it, a brief indication follows.

Qualities of the Sephiroth

Kether, also known as The Crown: Kether is the Divine Spark from where all things derive. It exists without division or separation.

Chockmah, also known as Wisdom: Chockmah is the stimulating force of the Universe; from it all things were given motion. It is masculine power in its

widest sense and is symbolised by the Heavenly Father. The Zodiac is assigned to it.

Binah, also known as Understanding: Binah is represented by the Heavenly Mother, the feminine counterpart of Chockmah, who gives birth to all things in existence. The dynamic interplay with Chockmah is the creative force of the Universe. Saturn is assigned to this sphere.

Chesed, also known as Mercy: Chesed has a similar masculine and positive energy to Chockmah but on a lower plane. It can be seen as watery because all of the Deity's love and mercy are to be found here. The planet of Jupiter is assigned to it.

Geburah, also known as Severity: Geburah's function is to temper divine energy that travels down the Tree of Life on its way to manifestation by burning away all that is superfluous. Its function is also the same when travelling up the tree towards Deity, as again all that is obsolete is burnt away. Like a forest fire it clears the way for fresh growth and further development. Mars is assigned here.

Tiphareth, also known as Beauty: Tiphareth is a place of perfection and calm and is the mediating sphere between super-consciousness and the conscious human mind. Here dwells the Holy Guardian Angel with whose help it is possible to approach the Divine. The Sun is assigned to Tiphareth.

Netzach, also known as Victory: Netzach symbolises positive fiery human creativity as well as emotion that inspires and urges us forward. As a result all expressions of human artistic creativity are assigned to it; such as art, music and dance. Venus is attributed to this Sephira.

Hod, also known as Splendour: Hod represents the logical and the rational in the human world and mind. Because of this all expressions of language and communication are assigned here, as well as mathematics and science. It is closely associated with Mercury.

Yesod, also known as Foundation: The ninth Sephira is the home of the Astral Light -simply stated this is the etheric substance that lies behind dense material; it is the blueprint of existence upon which physical matter is built. Yesod receives all of the energy from the Sephiroth above it and thus it can be seen as the pattern for the final physical manifestation in Malkuth. Dreams, visions and intuition are assigned here. This Sephira is attributed to the Moon.

Malkuth, also known as the Kingdom: Malkuth represents the realm of physical manifestation. It is everything as we physically know it, as processed by the human mind and our five senses. It is the only Sephira that has achieved a level of stability -all the others are in constant motion. In a very real sense it is the Divine made manifest. The Earth is attributed here.

It can be seen from the above that the Sephiroth are capable of encompassing all things for their range of qualities is infinitely broad. Let us not ignore though the twenty two paths between them. Whilst the Sephiroth are emanations of the energy of Deity, the paths are viewed as channels for this power to travel from one Sephira to the next. They are also a route up which an individual may travel on a journey back to the Divine. Similarly to the Sephiroth each path has its own correspondences starting with the assignation of a Hebrew letter. Each letter in this alphabet has a meaning, which can be meditated upon, aiding the Witch or magician on a particular path. The use of the Hebrew alphabet in the Kabbalah explains why this language is so prevalent in magical practice [9].

The Kabbalah and the Four Elements

Another way that the forces of life are expressed is through the Four Elements of Fire, Water, Air and Earth. All Witches are familiar with this concept from the moment that they cast their first circle. The Kabbalah is capable of giving a whole new dimension to these forces as it can show how they are interlinked and react with each other.

This is based on the Divine name of יהוה (reading right to left Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh), more commonly known as Jehovah or the Tetragrammaton. Many people mistakenly see that Jehovah refers to a masculine god and this is because of the influence of Christianity and Judaism. For occult Kabbalists the name is seen to refer to a Deity that combines both feminine and masculine properties. Seen as such, Witches have no problem accepting the concept of Jehovah as it is analogous to their ideas of a heavenly being that was later divided into a Goddess and a God [10].

Yod or Fire is the first energetic and volatile rush of divine energy.

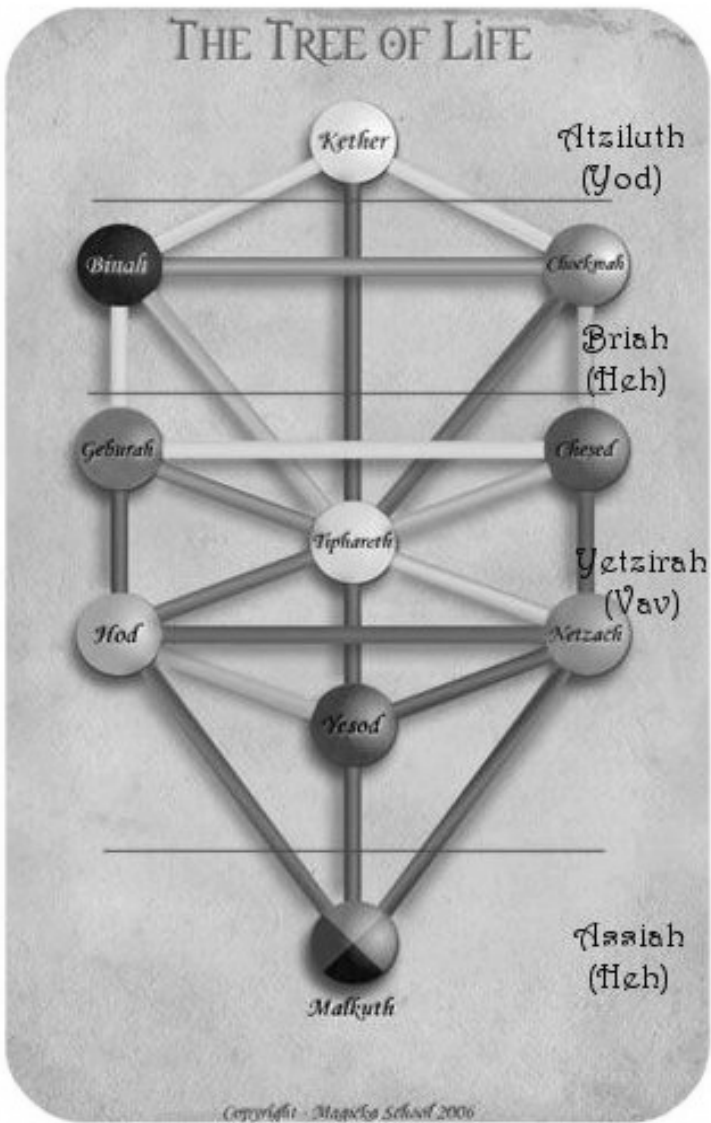
Heh or Water is the start of that energy being used creatively and the first constrictions of form.

Vav or Air is the communicative aspect of existence.

Heh or Earth is the final solid form that appears on our plane of physical existence.

The Four Kabbalistic Worlds

The Elements are shown on the Tree through the Four Kabbalistic Worlds:



The Tree of Life is divided into four sections or worlds that correlate to the Four Elements and Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh. These Four Worlds are known as Atziluth, Yetzirah, Briah and Assiah. You will find that there can be some disagreement among Kabbalists as to which Sephiroth are linked with which Kabbalistic World but the diagram above gives the generally accepted breakdown.

The Worlds are categorised in this way:

Atziluth is the Divine World

Briah is the Creative World

Yetzirah is the Formative World

Assiah is the Material World

Atziluth is attributed to Yod and is the domain of Supreme Divinity and Primordial Fire. It is the initial impulse of everything.

Briah is attributed to Heh and is the area of Primordial Water. It is the realm of Archangels. It represents the fluidity and inventiveness of creation.

Yetzirah is attributed to Vav and is the realm of Primordial Air. It represents the connections and communication behind all things. It is the realm of angels. In scientific terms it would govern things such as gravity as well as the attraction between atoms and subatomic particles. For the occultist this world is approximate to the Astral Plane because the etheric framework behind physical manifestation is to be found here.

Assiah is attributed to Heh. This is the world of Primordial Earth where exists all physical phenomena.

The Purpose of the Tree

Divine light is seen to cascade down the Tree on its journey from the heavens to the Earth. Through its internal connections the mighty symbol sequences and attempts to show the processes of creation that emanate ultimately from a state of non-being known as the limitless light or *Ain Soph Aur*. It also aims to be a symbol of everything; quite literally all knowledge of the Universe can be placed within the realms of the different Sephira and the different Kabbalistic worlds. It is therefore a tool to organise all information and because the Sephira and the Paths are

interconnected it can show how all things correspond and relate. Also, just as it shows the path of Spiritual Light down into physical manifestation, it shows too the path from the physical to the heavenly and therefore provides a road-map to the Divine.

Understood in these senses the Tree provides a Witch with an amazing overview of all things and an extraordinarily potent basis upon which to work magic.

How Witches can use the Kabbalah

Using Correspondences

The first thing that must be done is to begin to meditate on the Tree and fill it with correspondences. This is ultimately a personal thing. Some books, in particular Crowley's 777 [11], will give tables of all manner of related things. These are mainly based on centuries of magical practice that has revealed particular connections. Goddesses and Gods, plants, crystals, magical tools and mythical creatures and real animals are all listed and related to different Sephiroth. However, as with all authors, their own ideas creep in and are added to the mix. Modern publications now relate the Sephiroth to psychology and even the processes of government [12]. There is no definitive list, and at the end of the day, although published works should be studied and built upon, the most powerful correspondences will be the ones that have been personally tested or devised and seen to be true.

The Tree is a universal frame upon which we can hang our experiences of life. At heart our lives are a mixture of the personal and the universal. No-one sees life quite like another person and what works for one does not work for another. We must carve our own destiny, which we base on our own correspondences. And yet we operate within certain parameters and broadly speaking behave in the same way within a society.

A very mundane example of this is going shopping in a supermarket. Each of us has unique shopping patterns and as a general rule no two shopping baskets will be filled with exactly the same goods. Each buyer's needs are slightly different and because of this, different items are selected for purchase. There are other unique circumstances as well; no-one goes at the same time, no-one moves at the same speed, no-one talks to the same people. Overall, the experience is entirely

unique. Similarly with the Kabbalah's correspondences, your knowledge of life and what you hang on the Tree will be different from my knowledge and what I hang on it. Our lives are not the same.

However, just as our lives are different in general, we operate within universal frames. Each person needs to eat and the choices we have are dictated by what is in stock and the structure of the shop. Certain age groups will buy the same things and buying patterns can be readily discerned [13]. In this respect our lives are knowable and very similar.

We are therefore all unique but function within defined limits. We have personal differences but operate within a kind of universal structure. Those that begin to complain here of being slaves to corporate food giants have missed the point. Whether you live in a city or a rain forest, societal patterns will always shape individuals and create and maintain certain behaviours. And even if you decide to turn your back on society you still have to operate under the fact you are human and living on a planet. You cannot escape working within a frame.

Similarly, the Tree of Life gives us the broad pattern of existence within which all things have to function. However, the fact it can be clothed with our own ideas allows for the unique individual experiences of life and shows how they relate to the whole.

So what has this got to do with Magic?

One of the keys to magic is the doctrine of correspondences. As you have seen all things magical, from the setting up of an altar, to the casting of a circle, to the construction of a talisman, to designing a ritual, are based on relating one thing to another. This is done as such correspondences are extremely powerful signals to the brain that have an enormous impact on strengthening the will. Without a strong will capable of correctly visualising an outcome, and reviewing and adapting a strategy over time, there is no magic.

There are many ways to construct the correspondences. Perhaps foremost of these is to build up as much knowledge about the Sephiroth as possible. This can be done through a mixture of reading and meditation (see exercises below). Over a period of time the Tree of Life will become imprinted on the brain and the meaning of the Sephiroth and the connections between each Sephira will become apparent. Right from the outset of this process you will learn of relevant

correspondences. For example, you already know that the Sephiroth are linked to the planets. If you cast your mind back to the chapter on herbs you will realise that they too had planetary associations, thus herbs and the Sephiroth can be easily related. The same is true of crystals. So far so good; it is easy enough to attribute things such as these, but what about other objects that are not often thought of as magical? What about a mobile phone? Or a rifle? Where might be put these things? The answer is less obvious. The phone is of course a communication device so maybe that should be placed with the Sephira Hod, which is attributed to Mercury. A rifle maybe goes with the Sephira Geburah, corresponding with Mars. Such things have to be personal choices as there are no magical grimoires that will tell you where to put items from the modern world.

Meditation

Another important way of using the Tree is for meditative purposes. Perhaps its most important use is to allow the individual to spiritually progress. Using meditation, attempts can be made to ascend the paths of the Tree by a process of spiritual refinement. Initially the goal is to meet one's Holy Guardian Angel (HGA), located in the Sephira Tiphareth, and with the HGA's help and guidance, climb the paths yet further with the ultimate goal of becoming one with the Divine. Many believe that this final objective is possible only in a spiritual incarnation, for one can never be perfect enough to access the last three Sephiroth as a physical being.

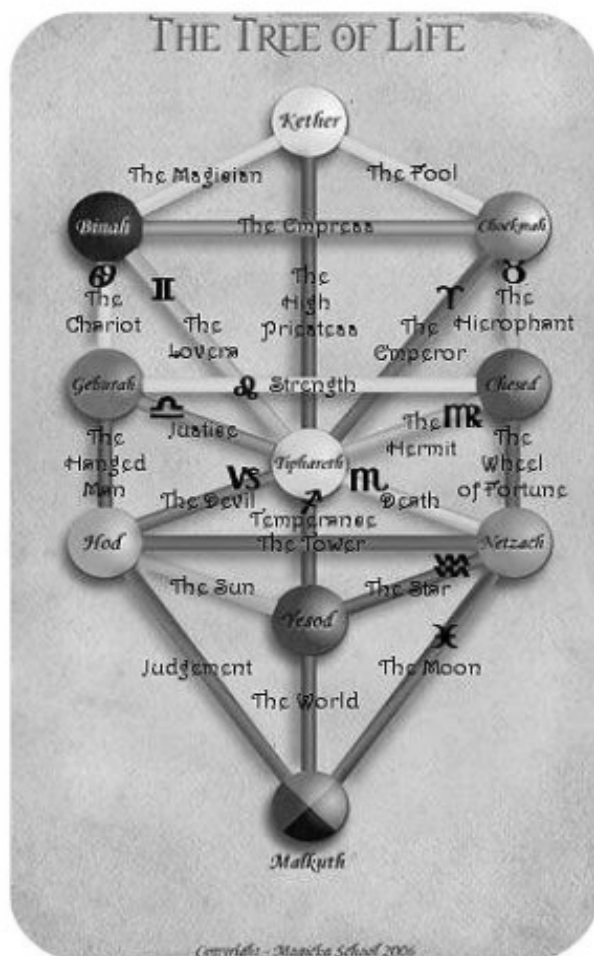
A method of doing this is given next chapter in "Levels of Being", for the moment though it is a good idea to become familiar with the Tree and find out as much as you can about it.

The Tree of Life and the Tarot

As those who are taking the Tarot courses at Magicka will be aware the Tree of Life and the cards based on a Golden Dawn model are inextricably linked, these include the Waite/Smith (Rider-Waite) and the Crowley Thoth deck. The cards can be seen to occupy different places on the Tree. The Major Arcana are attributed to the paths, the Minor Arcana to the Sephiroth. Everything that each card represents is therefore attributable to the Tree and provides another way in to build up correspondences that can be used in magical and meditative work. In

fact, it can not be stated strongly enough that the Golden Dawn influenced Tarots are magical books *par excellence*. They are one of the best keys to magical practice ever made, and far more than a divinatory tool.

This topic is a vast one and is explained in detail in Magicka School's *Advanced Tarot Course*. For those who do not want to study this topic deeply we explain merely how the cards are placed on the Tree in the diagram and tables below.



The Major Arcana Placings

The Court Cards

Card	Sephira
Kings (Crowley 's Knights)	Chockmah
Queens	Binah
Prince (some packs call this card the Knight)	Tiphareth
Princess (some packs call this card the Page)	Malkuth

The Small Cards

Cards	Sephira
Aces	Kether
Twos	Chockmah
Threes	Binah
Fours	Chesed
Fives	Geburah
Sixes	Tiphareth
Sevens	Netzach
Eights	Hod
Nines	Yesod
Tens	Malkuth

Research Project

For the research project for this lesson I would like you to go away and find out all you can about the Kabbalah. Some of you may already have begun to do this as you may be taking the Tarot or Kabbalah course.

In particular take some time to find out about how things can correspond to the Sephiroth. Take a look through the things you have learnt already and identify information that can be linked to them. Try not to be too concerned at this stage as to whether an association is “right” or “wrong”. You will find that some things you decide will be effective throughout your life, while others you will want to revise as you learn more.

The following gives some areas to work on and one or two pointers:

- Herbs are a good place to start as planetary correspondences will make this relatively easy.
- Similarly, metal and planetary associations can be added.
- Next think about where different magical tools might be placed. Which Sephirah might a wand be attributed to? What about an athame? Or a crystal ball? Or an altar?
- Think about the Goddess and the God, where might they go? What about the aspects of Maid, Mother and Crone? Or the sacrificial God?
- How about the Archangels? Consider too the forces associated with the Quarters.
- When you have completed all of these you will see just what potential the Tree of Life has as a compendium of magical knowledge and really begin to appreciate how it can be used to enhance your magical workings.

Exercises

Getting to Know the Tree

One of the most effective ways of getting to know the tree better is to spend some time drawing it. Some will be happiest making quick sketches in a notebook, whilst others will want to make poster sized Trees that can be used as an item for display.

The first key thing with any approach for the moment is to become familiar with the Sephiroth names, their qualities and the things they are associated with and drawing these out for yourself is a powerful way to remember them.

Visualising the Tree

This meditation has been taken from the On-line *Advanced Tarot Course* and some of you may already be familiar with it. Even if you have done it before, it is a great idea to use it during the period of this lesson as it will serve to enhance your experience of the Tree.

Light a candle in your meditation space. If you wish, use either sandalwood or frankincense as incense. Breathe in for eight, hold for four and breathe out for eight. Repeat this cycle of breath for a couple of minutes.

You find yourself standing in a in a high, well lit room with windows on all sides. Out of the window you can see snow peaked mountain ranges and pristine blue skies. To your right the sun is rising, you can feel its warmth through the window and you are bathed in its gentle clear light.

About a metre directly above your head appears a ball of swirling white light. Its intensity is like nothing you have ever seen before, it seems almost other worldly and you feel slightly afraid, as if it could burn you. Suddenly half a metre above your left shoulder, below the level of the white sphere, a ball of grey light is created. It pulsates softly but makes no sound. Then, without warning and half a metre above your right shoulder, a deep, black globe forms. It is blackness as you can only imagine, unfathomable, a void into which it seems all things could fall into or come from. Together these three spheres form a triangle, contemplate this for a moment and know that they are the origin of all existence.

You now become aware of a sphere of calming blue at your left shoulder. You can feel its effect on your body as a gentle but insistent push that is trying to awaken you.

Almost immediately on your right shoulder you are aware of a sensation of heat as an orb of red light seems to sWitch on. As it does so there is a rushing feeling of energy that starts to flow through your shoulders and into the rest of your body.

Next a golden and white flecked whirlpool of energy materialises at your *solar plexus*. You feel happiness, warmth, safety and a sense of love that fills your body. Contemplate these sensations for a few moments and allow the energy to circulate round you.

At your left hip a sphere of green comes into existence. It is the green of spring, fresh, new and alive, full of promise and vigour.

On your right hip a ball of orange comes into view that is bright and quick, as well as profoundly nourishing and refreshing.

A spinning, vibrant globe of purple forms at your sex organs. This gives you a feeling of deep mystery. You are aware that it is a gateway from which appears life on the material plane. Meditate for a few moments on the feeling that somehow you embody the power of life and of death.

Finally, at your feet a sphere of citrine, russet, olive and black pulsates solidly. This is your grounding and where you and everything around you exists.

Spend a few moments contemplating the beauty of these lights or energies that surround you and are part of you. Know that through them all things are made manifest.

Starting at your feet slowly make the balls disappear. The sphere of citrine, russet, olive and black disappears first, then the purple sphere fades slowly followed by the orange, the green, the golden, the red, the blue, the black, the grey and at last the white.

Become aware of your breathing again. Breathe in for eight, hold for four and out for eight. Repeat this cycle for a few minutes.

When you have finished make sure you record what you have experienced.

Reviewing Magic in the Light of the Tree

Take some time to review your magical work in light of what you have learnt this lesson. As an advanced student you will have been recording your magical workings for many months or even years. You should have a considerable amount of writing to look back upon.

Take a look at what didn't work. What were the reasons for this? You may be able to put many of them down to the fact that a consistent and reviewed magical plan wasn't followed. There may be some, though, that aren't so easily explained away. It is these that should be closely looked at. Think about what you have learnt this lesson. What was the magic you wanted to practice and the goal you set out to achieve? Where would it relate to on the Tree of Life? For example, matters of love might be related to Netzach or education to Hod. Then again you may decide that the area you were working in doesn't relate to just one Sephira and encompasses several. Think now about the actions you took and the things that you used to work this magic. Are these in line with the Sephira chosen?

Often magical work fails because the correspondences used are not consistent enough. One of the things the Tree provides is a way of making sure that the whole of a piece of magical work is drawn together.

If you found that the things you did and used weren't in line with the Sephira, and if you still regard the desire as important, you might like to try re-working the magic using things that correspond in a more coherent way.

End Blessing

Well done, you have now completed the fifth chapter of the *Advanced Course*!

This lesson has given you the key to really making the magic that you work cogent and powerful. Over time you will begin to see just how effective the Tree of Life is as a way of organising and determining your practice of magic.

Many Witches never reach this kind of level of adeptness in their craft and you should be justifiably pleased that you are now working at a very good level.

May the Tree of Life open out for you many things in life that you were previously unaware of, may it strengthen your magical skills and bring joy to you and those around you.

In Love and Light,

Blessed Be

And see you next chapter.

Notes

[1] The academic debate over the possible dates need not concern us here. It is enough to state that it is ancient; those that want to know more could start their studies by consulting G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton University Press, 1991.

[2] This too can be contentious, although it is generally accepted that the Kabbalah coalesces around Moses de Leon in Spain with the writing of the *Sepher ha-Zohar* (*The Book of Splendour*) in the 1280s.

[3] Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) was a humanist philosopher and Kabbalistic magician. Despite dying at an early age he is one of the key figures of the Renaissance.

[4] Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Llewellyn 2003.

[5] The Golden Dawn were familiar with Francis Barrett's *The Magus or Celestial Intelligencer* widely considered as plagiarising Agrippa's work.

[6] An obvious example of this is how many modern Witches draw on one time Golden Dawn member Aleister Crowley's Kabbalistically influenced 777 when finding correspondences to be used in magical working.

[7] This is not to say that the other practices are inconsequential, far from it in fact, but the student can pursue these at a later date.

[8] Over history there have been a variety of ways to arrange the Sephiroth. The one given in the lesson is the standard symbol used in magic today.

[9] Some of you may have been wondering why the *Key of Solomon the King*, for example, is full of Hebraic text.

[10] In the Wiccan creation myth contained in the *Vangelo delle Streghe* Diana existed before dark and light, before the creation of masculine and feminine forces. See Charles G. Leland, *Aradia, Gospel of the Witches*, Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1999, p.18.

[11] Aleister Crowley, *777 and other Qabalistic Writings*, Weiser 1986.

[12] Naomi Ozaniec gives a psychological slant to the Kabbalah in her *The Aquarian Qabalah*, Watkins, 2003. Will Parfiit relates the Kabbalah to many areas

of life, the political world may be found on p.218 of his *The Complete Guide to the Kabbalah*, Rider, 2001.

[13] Supermarkets make a great study of shopping behaviour and spend fortunes on laying out and stocking their stores to maximise profits based on how different shoppers buy.

Chapter Six: Exploring the Planes of Life

Exploring the Planes of Life

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will learn about techniques Witches use to explore the planes of life.

Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete.

There are also two lesson related exercises for you to work on.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Introduction

In *Wicca Revealed* you learnt about the Theory of Levels as well as two preliminary exercises (the Pentagram of Life and the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram) that will aid you in preparing to explore the layers of existence and contacting your Higher Self. This is important as Union with the Divine is fundamental both to realising your true self and the practice of magic.

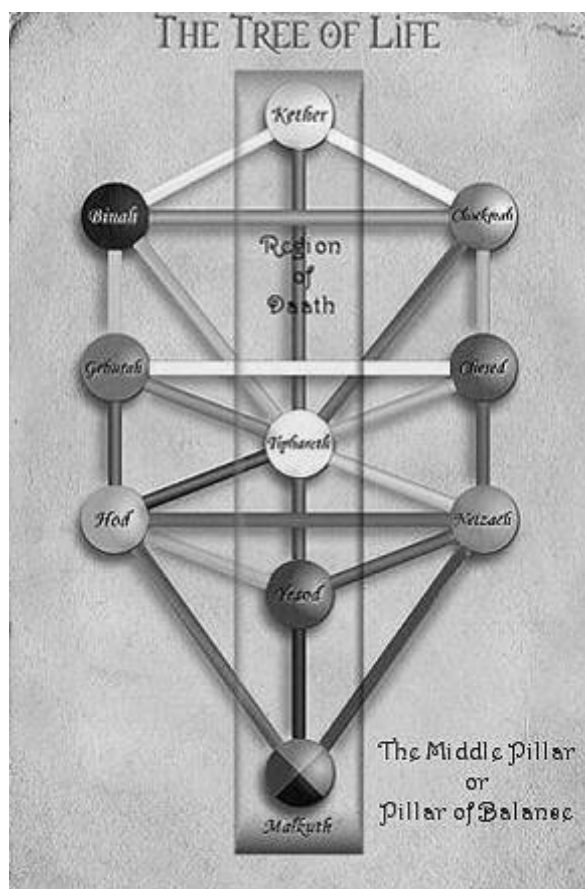
As you will recall from the previous lesson on this topic, a human is made up of different levels. Various authorities differ in how these levels may be divided and also use varying terminology. Most agree, however, that a human ranges in composition from the spiritual, to the mental, and from the astral to the physical. There are many techniques that can be used for accessing these levels. The ones that I give will be based on the Kabbalah and its central symbol the Tree of Life. This is standard practice in High Magic based on a Golden Dawn model, and is often incorporated into Wicca. As was stated in the last lesson it is easy to get distracted on the planes so that the journey becomes one long wander without structure or meaning. The Kabbalah, and especially the Pillar of Balance exercise, provides a route map that can be relied upon. Another reason for providing a Kabbalistic basis is because it will assist the novice in avoiding unhelpful or dangerous entities. Before beginning any of the exercises in this lesson it is hoped that you will have followed my advice and made a regular practice of the Pentagram of Life as well as the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP). None of this is intended to scare you. Take sensible precautions and enjoy the adventure.

Before you Begin

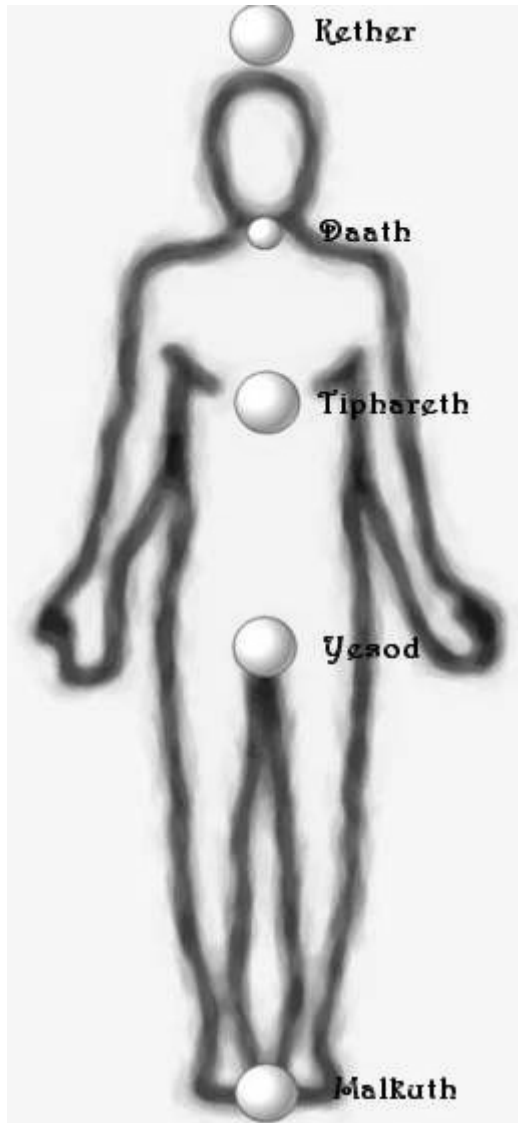
The Pillar of Balance exercise is a prerequisite to learning to ascend the realms of existence. It should be combined with both the Pentagram of Life and the LBRP and all should be practiced together until you feel confident with them.

This section has been based on adaptations of the Middle Pillar Ritual as given by Israel Regardie in his book *The Middle Pillar* [1]. I have given the Golden Dawn model in detail so that it is clear to you what energies are involved and below this there is also a Wiccan adaptation. One can be used just as effectively as the other and I will leave you to decide which to choose.

The middle pillar is, as the name implies, the central pillar of the Tree of Life. The Sephiroth found on it are Kether, Tiphareth, Yesod and Malkuth. The region of Daath is also included which is found between Tiphareth and Kether:



Each of the five centres that are worked with during the Pillar of Balance exercise (Kether, Daath, Tiphareth, Yesod and Malkuth) is associated with a part of the human body:



Kether is the energy of spirit that is attributed to a central position just above the crown of the head.

Daath is attributed to the throat region.

Tiphareth is associated with the heart in particular, although its centre is at the bottom of the sternum and its influence extends over the whole of the *solar plexus*.

Yesod is centred on the sex organs.

Malkuth is associated with the feet, with its centre on the soles when both feet are together.

Before starting the exercise ground and centre. Performing a meditation that you find calming is also beneficial as it is important that the mind and body are relaxed. Stand upright or lie down with your hands loosely placed at the sides and with your eyes closed. Each energy centre has a divine name that will need to be intoned as faithfully as possible. Try to utter the words so that they vibrate within you-some people literally quiver all over, this will take some practice to achieve but it will heighten the experience. Each step of the exercise should take three to five minutes when mastered. At first you may want to spend only a minute or so on each level and slowly build up the time from there.

1. Visualise a brilliant white sphere of light above your head. This is representative of pure Spirit and should be regarded with reverence and a certain awe. Intone the word Eheieh (pronounced E hay yay) several times. This means “I will be”.

2. Next bring down the light so that it runs down the back of the neck and widens out at the point of Daath. Intone the words “YHVH ELOHIM” (Yoed Hay Vahv Hay E-loh-heem) several times. Whilst doing this realise that you are consciously connected to the divine. YHVH ELOHIM stands for the God and the Goddess. As you will by now know YHVH are the English letter equivalents of the Hebrew Letters יהוה, which in English are known as Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh. These make up the Divine Name or Tetragrammaton. On one level they stand for the elemental forces of Fire, Water, Air and Earth. ELOHIM is a feminine Hebrew noun with a masculine plural ending -Dion Fortune suggests it should be translated as “God and Goddess” [2].

3. Let the beam of light descend now to the heart or the *solar plexus*. Feel warmth spread from inside your heart and through your whole body. It is as if you have brought the energy of the Sun into you yourself. Say “YHVH ELOAH ve-DAATH (Yoed, Hay, Vahv, Hay El-oh-ah vee Da-ath) three or four times.

4. From the *solar plexus* bring the light down to the sex organs. Feel the spiritual generative power within you, the energy behind all things. Intone “SHADDAI EL CHAI (Shah-day El Kai) a number of times.

5. Finally bring the light down to the feet. Say “ADONAI ha-ARETZ” (AH-doh-nai ha-Ah-rets). The light of Spirit has been brought down to the earth and is now manifest within you.

A Wiccan Pillar of Balance Ritual

Now that you know how it works I can provide you with a Wiccan Pillar of Balance ritual. The stages are exactly the same except that the divine names have been changed.

1. Visualise a brilliant white sphere of light above your head. This is pure Spirit that existed before the separation into the Goddess and God as according to the

Vangelo delle Streghe [3]. This is the divine spark that came before all else. Intone the words “I will be” several times.

2. Next bring down the light so that it runs down the back of the neck and widens out at the point of Daath. Intone the names for the Goddess and God that you most often work with. Remember that you are connected to their divine energy.

3. Let the beam of light descend now to the heart or the *solar plexus*. Say the name of a cyclic vegetation goddess or god such as Persephone or Tammuz [4]. Feel warmth spread from inside your heart and through your whole body. It is as if you have brought the energy of the Moon and the Sun into you yourself. Feel their rays, symbolic of divine feminine and masculine energy coursing through your arteries.

4. From the *solar plexus* bring the light down to the sex organs. Feel the spiritual generative power within you, the energy behind all things. Here a woman may want to intone the name of a great mother goddess with strong associations to the Moon such as Diana or Artemis. A man may want to use a god that has a strong fertility aspect such as Pan.

5. Finally bring the light down to the feet. A woman may wish to intone the words for an Earth goddess such as Demeter or Ceres. A man may want to use a hunting god such as Cernunnos. The light of Spirit has been brought down to the earthly plane and is now manifest within you.

Before finishing, perform the Pentagram of Life and the LBRP again. Remember to record your experiences in your Book of Shadows or journal. Once you have gained proficiency you are then ready to explore the levels of being.

Travelling in the Higher Planes

I teach two basic methods of travelling in the higher planes. The first uses a simulacrum outside of the physical body to carry the consciousness into higher realms. The second relies on tuning in to the planes of existence along the spectrum of consciousness without being outside of the physical self. Not everyone will find the methods equally efficacious and it is quite normal to choose one over the other. It should also be pointed out that there are many ways to facilitate travel in the higher planes that I do not consider here [5].

Method One: Travelling as a Simulacrum

A simulacrum is like a ghostly double or *doppelganger*. Made of astral energy its creation involves separating the astral body from the aura and projecting consciousness into it. By this method it is then possible to become conscious of the Astral Plane. It is feasible to will this to happen and there are many methods to achieve it. In this lesson I will give you one that is commonly used. Over the

course of the month make a number of attempts at it. As with all magical practice do not become put off if you don't succeed after your third or fourth attempt. It can take time to genuinely achieve its existence. I recommend spending no more than ten to fifteen minutes on this exercise per day. Gradually the skill will build up and it is important not to become fatigued.

Light a candle in your meditation space and perfume the air if you wish with any fragrance that you find relaxing. Ground and centre. Perform the Pentagram of Life and the LBRP. You will have noticed of course that the LBRP forms a protective circle and there is therefore no need to use the Opening of the Temple to create another one. Either sit or lay down making sure that you are comfortable. Perform any meditation that you find calming and that balances your energies, such as the Fountain of Light. Next visualise yourself standing in front of you. Whether you see yourself clothed or naked doesn't matter. As with other exercises where you have been training your will, use your five senses to create what you see. Obviously visualising an astral body is a lot more difficult than doing the same for an apple or other simple object and you can expect to need practice. As always don't strain, it won't come any the easier just because you scrunched up your eyes, raised your blood pressure and tensed up, in fact these bodily reactions will just get in your way. When you have finished remember to ground your energy.

After some time you will have gained the knack. You will know when you have really achieved creating a simulacrum as it is impossible not to have a reaction to seeing yourself in front of you. In fact you may be so shocked that it simply disappears and then refuses to re-appear for a while, sometimes quite a while. Nothing can be more frustrating, but if you have achieved it once you can achieve it again. The next stage is then to learn to keep the simulacrum in existence for a period of time and to do this over several sessions. This really does take some concentration and can be extremely draining. No-one said magic was easy!! Try turning the simulacrum around, move its arms and legs, its face and so on. Amusing as this might seem it is essential that you can do this as it will be necessary that you can move around in your surrogate body.

The next step is the one that can be the most unnerving. You are going to project your consciousness into this being. As you learnt in the lesson on the theory of levels this is possible as each level has its separate existence. Your consciousness is not dependent on your physical body for its survival; it can exist quite happily outside of what you regard as "you". Literally will your consciousness into the simulacrum. Imagine yourself seeing what it can see. Obviously it can see you and the room it is in. When you have transferred your consciousness successfully you will know; there is a noticeable difference between having the experience for real and having just an imaginative trip. It will most likely be very shocking -you can see "yourself" sitting in front of "you" as well as move around in space independent of your physical body. As above, when you created your double in the first place, do not be surprised if the whole thing disappears with your shock and refuses to re-materialise for a time.

Make sure that you bring your astral body back into yourself correctly. Much is written about the dangers of not doing so; to be honest in our experience much of this is exaggeration but it can lead to disturbed sleep and a sense of somehow being a little incomplete. The best way to reconnect is to visualise the simulacrum reversing nearer and nearer towards you, through the other layers of the aura until eventually it's directly superimposed on your physical body.

Once you have achieved placing your consciousness in the simulacrum you will then need to be able to do this for an extended period of time. Some people find that having come so far this is easy to maintain, whilst others will struggle for a long time to master staying in the double. Do not be tempted to move out of the circle created by the LBRP just yet. Great as the temptation may be to go out and travel it is unadvisable in this fledgling state. Don't run before you can walk!

Exploring the Astral Plane in the Form of a Simulacrum

The simulacrum is not physical and cannot interact in the physical world; for example it can't pick up a book, go and make you a coffee or do the dusting. Also it doesn't have what we would normally understand as sensate faculties. It interacts with astral reality and through it your consciousness is aware of its surroundings on the astral plane. Much of what "you" can see will bear a resemblance to the physical world, as the astral plane is the realm directly behind the physical. Some claim too that their simulacrum has a sense of smell and hearing, although it is rare that someone finds they can feel and taste things. The physical body really is the best vehicle on the physical plane and for this reason most Witches don't waste their time trying to use their simulacrum to see whether their best friend has been gossiping behind their back, or using it to find out information that will bring them financial gain. Such experiments rarely, if ever, yield satisfactory results. The simulacrum works best on the astral plane and it is to there that we will now turn our attention.

Once you have mastered being able to move about in a simulacrum within the circle space you created you next need to be able to get it to create a circle of protection on the astral plane (note: this is not a ritual circle, it is a circle that the simulacrum can surround itself with when it travels should it feel the need). This is done as you would in the physical world except that of course it is your astral self that performs the task. As with forming the simulacrum itself this is not an easy thing to do and many attempts may be needed before a satisfactory result is achieved. Once you are able to get the simulacrum to protect itself you are then in a position to wander where you will. You will find that it is not confined by space/time considerations and can literally go anywhere on the level it exists. The hardest part of astral travel is to resist the temptation to endlessly discover new and interesting things and discipline yourself to concentrate on effecting union with your Higher Self. By all means go travelling, see the sites and interact with the various entities but don't make that your life's ambition; the idea is to climb the planes towards spirit.

To this end the next stage in your development is to learn to perform the Pillar of Balance exercise (given in the previous page) on the astral plane. This will have the effect of strengthening your astral body so that it can connect with, and experience, higher levels of being.

Through doing this exercise you will find that over time you will build up an idea of what each of the Sephira that you have worked with represent. This is very important to do and detailed notes on Malkuth, Yesod, Tiphareth and Kether as well as the region of Daath should be kept. Before you can rise on the planes you need to have an idea of where you are rising to. Each person's take on this will be unique so for example one may perceive that the realm of Yesod is a Sephira full of fleeting illusion whilst another will find in it a definite pattern behind all things. There is no standard "correct" viewpoint, although it is possible to find tables of correspondence in the books in the reading list. I would recommend though that before you consult these that you create your own (which you should be doing already if you followed the advice from last lesson). You can then compare them at a later date with other published ideas.

Once you have done this you are then in a position to ascend into the realms of being. This is done by willing the simulacrum onto the level of one of the Sephira. Before you start make sure you create a protective circle. It is a good idea to explore the outer reaches of Malkuth first. Although this Sephira represents the physical world, in its higher aspects it, of course, begins to correlate to Yesod and is fundamentally entwined with it. Keep notes on the journey. What did you find there and what were you able to do? Only after you have done this a few times should you go and look at published sources of other's experiences. How do yours compare? When rising on the planes it is important to be calm and balanced as any disturbance will be reflected in your experience. It is also important to keep a pure heart and mind for as you think so will you create.

At a later date one will of course wish to venture further, first perhaps into the Summerlands in the Higher Astral, or, from there, into the Higher Mental. This latter region is approximate to the Sephira Tiphareth and is the furthest one can travel without the aid of the Holy Guardian Angel (HGA) or Higher Self. Meeting one's HGA is an individual experience and for that reason it is difficult to describe. It is also hard to say how knowledge of this entity will come about. Perhaps the best that can be said is that when one is ready the HGA will find you or, looking at it another way, when you are ready you will have created the circumstances for the meeting to happen. The HGA provides a direct link with the divine and it will instruct the seeker as it sees fit. It may seem that such comments are vague and elusive and, of course, in one way they are, but this is not intentional, it is just that the nature of the experience is such that to try to describe it would be false as it is intensely personal. However, there are one or two guidelines that can be given:

All messages from it are positive and non-judgemental. It is a being of love; love is never less than positive and it never sits in judgement in the sense that we use it in our earthly plane.

The experience should “feel” right. You will know in your heart of hearts if you are having a genuine experience or whether you are just kidding yourself.

Although the message it gives may not be clear straight away you will at some point see the wisdom of what you are told.

Notice that the HGA is referred to as an “it”, this is because it is a personification of spirit and ultimately spirit is above the division of sexes or what is meant by feminine and masculine forces within creation. However, the form it can take varies; to some it will be androgynous; for others it will appear as a woman or man.

Method Two: Exploring the Planes of Existence in the Spectrum of Consciousness

Another way of exploring the planes of existence is by moving along the spectrum of consciousness while in the physical body. The techniques for this form of travel are almost identical to those outlined above except there is no need to create a simulacrum.

First ground and centre then perform the Pentagram of Life and the LBRP. Knowledge of the energies of the Astral, Mental and Spiritual Planes will have already been built up over time by practising the Pillar of Balance exercise.

The levels of consciousness can then be accessed by meditative exercises around the particular Sephiroth. These work because, in effect, by turning your attention through meditation towards the different spheres or levels you are in fact becoming as one with their energy. As with the simulacrum method once Tiphareth has been reached it is necessary for contact to be made with the HGA before any further progress can be made. Please note that the meditations should be used merely as starting points and are not comprehensive in themselves (these are the same or similar meditations to those in our *Advanced Tarot Course*). It is up to the individual student to develop upon them as they see fit.

Malkuth: The Kingdom

Visualise a temple in front of you. It is made of four pillars and a roof. Each side of the structure is made of billowing white curtains. You walk up some stairs and past two columns onto a central dais. In front of you is an altar. Through the fabric you can see the world brightly lit by a rising Sun. In the East the landscape is mountainous and airy, to the South it is fiery and desert like, in the West you can see a great ocean and in the North you see rivers, trees, fields, villages and towns. Take some moments to survey these scenes. What can you see in the world? What do you choose to focus on?

Turn your attention to the altar in front of you. Upon it rest five candles placed in five golden sticks. Light one of these and make sure it is in the centre of the altar. Contemplate the fact that you have brought light into your own temple. What does this action signify?

Light another and carry it over to the East where you can see the rising Sun and mountains. Place it on the ground. Stand straight and give a little bow. As you do so say "I bring light in at the East".

Go back to the altar and in turn place a candle in the South (to the right of East as you face it). Look out upon the baking sand and desert plants. Bow and say "I bring light in at the South",

Next place a candle in the West. Reflect upon the great sea in front of you, what does it mean for you? As before, bow and say "I bring light in at the West."

Finally place a candle on the floor in the North of the temple. Look out upon the view. Bow and say "I bring light in at the North".

Walk back to the altar. You are now surrounded by a wheel of light. Think for a moment or two about the significance of this. This is your temple from which you can survey the world as well as the great elemental forces that make it up, and here you have brought in light.

To your left a gentle voice calls your name. You turn and recognise a figure of a young princess. Her robes are fantastically embroidered with butterflies and birds, salamanders and lions, mermaids and fishes, trees and flowers. She is not unlike the princesses or pages of the Tarot cards. In her hands she carries a beautiful globe full of greens and blues that you immediately recognise as the Earth. She speaks softly "I bring you joy and greetings -all that I have I give to you. What will you do for me in return? What will you give to our Kingdom?"

Contemplate this question. You do not have to give an answer straight away but realise that the world is yours and that you are able to give it many positive things that can create joy and harmony. Record your thoughts in your Book of Shadows.

Yesod, the Foundation

Visualise a large full Moon in front of you rising over a copse. Walk in its direction, in front of you is a path, take it and enter the wood. The trees obscure the light and it is dark and a little threatening. You can hear rustling leaves and the pad of one or two mammals. Continue to walk the path until you come to a clearing. This space is only lit by moonlight. Look around you. Surrounding the clearing are silver birch trees. On each tree are large cracked and warped mirrors that reflect the moonlight strangely and create gentle whirling moon beams. Take a minute or so to survey this eerily beautiful scene.

You decide to take a closer look at the mirrors. Walk over towards the largest birch tree and peer at the splintered reflective glass. You are surprised by what you

see, for the image was not what you regard as being yourself. Instead you saw a myriad swirl of energy that pulsated and glowed, seeming to change and restructure constantly. Intrigued you look beyond yourself in the shattered pane. The clearing too appears to be multi-coloured energy that vibrates and pulses, spins and moves. Nothing is static – everything is in flux.

You look back to the clearing and are taken aback to see that an angel stands before you. It is Gabriel, the Angel of Yesod. He is dressed in fine blue robes that have a light orange trim. In one hand he holds a chalice and in the other a horn of silver. He lifts the horn to his lips and blows a clear resounding note that echoes over the trees. One or two birds are disturbed as he does this.

He points at the tree and mirror that you looked in a minute ago. You turn and stare. You see yourself again but are infused with a peculiar pale glowing light. You see yourself but are aware of the radiance behind the physical. You realise that this is truly clear vision.

Become aware of your breathing again. Rise to normal consciousness. Record your impressions in your Book of Shadows.

Tiphareth, Beauty

You are on a high flat plain. The Sun above you beats down intensely. Look around to the North, East, South and West; you can see nothing, there are no features at all. As far as the mind can see there is just featureless desert.

At this point you may feel confused. This was supposed to be the place of beauty, the place you were supposed to meet your Holy Guardian Angel, the place where all was revealed or at least began to make sense. Yet all that apparently exists here is sand, sky and Sun. Is this some kind of trick? Some kind of joke? If this is how you feel, sit down on the ground and spend time contemplating why things seem this way.

However, you may know why things are as they are. In which case, you no longer need guidance from the School to continue on the Tree of Life.

When you are ready come to ordinary consciousness and record your impressions in your Book of Shadows. Be aware that this meditation is as it is for a reason. When you have found the reason you will be able to progress. You may find the answer immediately; you may find it comes in stages; you may find it takes many attempts; or you may never find it all.

Using other Sephiroth to Explore the Planes

You may find that once you start using these Kabbalistic style meditations that you wish to explore further on the planes using other Sephiroth on the Tree of Life as a basis. The material in this section can readily be incorporated into the

Pillar of Balance exercise and for those that wish to use a meditational method there are two suggested starting points. However I only give information for the remaining Sephirah before Tiphareth. Those that want to pursue the levels beyond that can find the information they need in the reading list at the end of the lesson.

Meditation on Hod

You find yourself in the centre of a temple with a high dome made of crystal through which you can see the Sun clearly in a perfect blue sky. It is comfortably warm even though the sunlight is beaming directly through the glass. You can here music playing softly in the background but it is not a music that you have heard before. Although obviously melodic and pleasing to the ear you are much more aware than is usual that you are listening to a stream of data and its patterns. Allow yourself to bask in the sound a while. Begin now to look at your surroundings. You notice that the walls and the columns are full of symbols, some you recognise; you can see Hebrew inscriptions, writing in Latin, Greek and English. There are a number of very beautiful stained glass windows. These are of archetypal images and the Sun and the Moon are particularly in evidence. Look carefully around the temple – what things can you see, what are the messages that you can understand?

Look up now at the Sun. It now appears more of an orange colour than gold. And the light that you are bathed in has also turned orange. Look at the shadows that it casts upon the writing on the walls. What difference does it make to what you understand – how does it colour your knowledge?

At one end there is an altar, it is draped in an orange cloth with the symbol for Mercury coloured silver in its centre. No candles are lit. Go over and light two. Know that you are responsible for your own learning; know that you must take up the challenge of keeping your learning alive and fresh. Although there are many things you can understand that decorate this temple, there are even more things that you are unfamiliar with or have no knowledge of at all. Knowing all things is impossible, yet despite this ultimate admission that we will fail, it is the desire to know that helps keep our interest in the world alive. Its never ending permutations fascinate and bring joy to our spirits for knowledge is an expression of the infinite and eternal.

Before you rises an hermaphrodite. The hermaphrodite represents harmony and balance in all things on all levels. It is an expression of the nature of creative force as well as perfect creation. Spend some time meditating on why the hermaphrodite is linked to the Sephiroth of Hod, the sphere of the intellect.

After a few moments you hear a soft yet authoritative voice call you. You hear the words “Know thyself”, “Know thyself” repeating over and over in rhythm to the music. Contemplate this command.

Meditation on Netzach

You find yourself outside a temple, surrounded by a small wood on the top of a cliff looking out to the sea. The waters below crash onto the rocks and you can hear the waves resounding in the wind. Breathe in the salt sea air and feel its warm dampness on your skin. Turn and walk up the stairs. On either side of the entrance at the top is a flaming torch. Take one of these in your hand and go inside. The temple is dark but your torch illumines the space and you find to your astonishment the most beautiful art work. Allow yourself some time to explore what you can see. Bring the torch up close enough so that you can see the colours and the shapes vividly. What artwork is in your temple?

When you are ready, go up to the door that you can make out on your left at the end. It is covered with a richly decorated curtain that on closer examination seems to contain people and scenes from your life. Everything is there; the good times and the bad times, the happy and the sad. To your surprise, though, the overall effect is one of beauty and harmony. You hadn't realised before just quite how marvellous your life really was. When you are ready, move the curtain aside. Behind it there is a heavy oak door. This is richly decorated with iron metal work. You can see dragons and ships, sea monsters and weapons of war. You do not understand but they seem to tell a mythic story, the meaning of which has been lost in time. Turn the door handle and peer through.

In front of you is a room bathed in a light green light. The light isn't quite eerie and isn't quite comforting. You no longer need your torch and place it in the holder by the side of the door that you now walk through. In front of you is a life-size statue of a beautiful naked woman. It is as if she is suspended in time, waiting to be awoken and brought to life. Ask yourself whether you have what it takes to wake her. What will it mean if you do? Are you willing to enter her service? Contemplate carefully what you must do.

Research Project

This chapter's research project has in a sense already been incorporated in the main part of the lesson; you will be researching the different planes of existence as you put the exercises into practice. It is important that you keep detailed notes of all that you find. When starting with the Pillar of Balance exercise you will find that there are many associations that will come into your mind. These will form the basis of your journey into the planes and it is important that you keep a record of them. After having practiced this for some time, then begin to look for information from published sources and use this to build up your picture yet further. You then will have enough information to provide you with an idea of the planes you will travel into, giving a context within which to place what you find.

Do not be disheartened if by the end of the month you are not able to experience astral travel, it takes time to get the knack. Some very famous Witches and magicians have devoted many months and even years to perfecting the art, so if you are struggling you are in good company. You may well wish to supplement what you have learnt in this lesson by reading some of the books in the list at the end.

The school and your fellow students would love to hear of your experiences with the exercises as well as astral travel. I am also interested in hearing the correspondences you have found to the various levels of being. As always feel free to post onto the Magicka School forum.

Exercises

As has been stated in the lesson it is very important that the mind should be relaxed and the heart put in a pure as state as is possible. This is actually far harder than it sounds as many of us are confronted with so much external stimulus that on some levels we barely know whether we are coming or going. We have pressures of work, pressures in our relationships and pressures over what to eat. We have to cope with being bombarded by adverts, being disturbed by the news, worrying over the mortgage and so on. It hardly seems as if we have a minute's peace. To cap it all our religion then tells us that we have to be calm and still. Sometimes it's enough to make you want to scream. How on Earth can we be relaxed and think pure thoughts when we live in a frenetic dog eat dog world? Are we all supposed to take ourselves off to some deserted religious island community?

Deep down though we realise that to really connect with ourselves and our surroundings we have to cultivate harmony and good clear intentions. Most of the exercises throughout Magicka's courses in Wicca and the Tarot help to do just that, but rarely have we given you specific relaxation techniques. In this section I therefore give another method to calm both your body and your mind.

Relieving Tension

This exercise works by first tensing up all the muscles in the body and then relaxing them. The first few times you practice this exercise it is recommended that you tense your muscles quite lightly. I don't want any of my readers having spasms!

Lie flat on the ground in your meditation space. You may want to put down a floor mat or mattress so that you are completely comfortable. Loose clothing and a blanket are also a good idea. Keep the room dark by either turning off the light or drawing the curtains. You do not need to light a candle or perfume the air.

Use any breathing pattern that you find calming. Concentrate on your breath alone and empty your mind of thoughts. If worries start to disturb you just bring your attention back to your breath, do not feel irritated or annoyed if disturbing thoughts persist, just bring your concentration back to your breath.

After a while imagine that you are breathing in golden energy, allow this to fill your lungs. As you exhale visualise pale grey clouds passing from you. Breathe in again and this time see the bright light entering your blood stream, purifying your blood, and sweeping away any fears or worries. Concentrate on doing this for a few minutes.

Next you are going to begin to tense up your body. Start by tensing your toes, then your feet, your legs, your stomach your chest, your arms, your shoulders and your face. Hold the tension throughout your body for thirty seconds or so. Then let the tension slowly go over your whole body at once. You will find that not only

is this more exhausting than you might expect but that a profound relaxation will sweep over you.

Relax and concentrate on your breathing again. When you are ready repeat tensing your whole body starting from your toes. Once you are tense all over hold it again for thirty seconds and let the tension go. Repeat this a couple of times more.

You will find that if you do this exercise in bed at night you will quickly fall into a deep sleep and is therefore an excellent practice for those that find it hard to drop off.

End Blessing

Well done, you have now completed the sixth lesson of the *Advanced Course*. You are now half way through!!

When put fully into practice, this month's lesson will change your life. Quite literally you will see that how you thought the world was is not actually how it is. You will have a much deeper knowledge of what you are and through consciously connecting with the divine you will find that you are able to do many things that you thought impossible. Life really will take on a whole new meaning.

You now have one month in which to digest the material and incorporate the exercises into your life. Remember the School wants to hear how you got on. After this period an exam will be available On-line and upon taking this you will be able to advance to Lesson Seven.

I wish you only joy and love as you explore the Higher Planes; may you find your True Self and from that moment on live happily and safely in the knowledge that you are divine.

As always,

Light and Love

Blessed Be

And see you next lesson

Appendix

The Pentagram of Life

“The Pentagram of Life” is very loosely based on the Golden Dawn’s “Qabalistic Cross” ritual. At first I considered just giving you the Golden Dawn material, with one or two adaptations, but the results weren’t pleasing, particularly as it is based on the pattern of a cross in the shape of a crucifix that seemed out of keeping with the spirit of Wicca. Nonetheless, the “Qabalistic Cross” is a powerful technique for bringing down spiritual light into the human body and I have retained the spirit of this at least.

Stand with legs comfortably apart and face East. Visualise a brilliant white light that just touches the top of your head. Reach up with your hand as if to touch this light and then bring it to your forehead (you could use your wand or athame if you want). This light symbolises Pure Spirit embodying female and male energies.

As you touch your forehead say the words:

“Great Spirit”.

Point towards your right foot with your right hand and intone:

“Queendom of Earth”.

As you do this, imagine the light descending from your forehead to your right foot. You should recognise that you are visualising drawing down Spirit into yourself on the Physical and Earthly Plane.

Raise the left arm parallel to the ground with hand outstretched and say:

“Transmitter of life”.

Imagine the light extending upwards from the right foot to the outstretched palm. Now raise your right arm and extend it horizontally like the left one. See the light extending from the left palm across your body and into the right hand. Say:

“Splendour of light”.

With the right hand point to the left foot and pronounce:

“Kingdom of Fire” as you do so visualise a ray of light descending to that foot.

See the ray ascend to the forehead. Touch your head with your right hand and intone:

“True desire”.

Clasp both hands together over the heart and utter:

“Shine through me ever”.

Extend your arms horizontally again. Visualise yourself alive with light in the shape of a pentagram and pronounce:

“Through day and through night”.

Bring your arms to your side and give a little bow to the East by way of thanks.

It is worth noticing that the pentagram is invoked in the direction of Earth to which the Goddess has been assigned. The words "*transmitter of life*" have been reserved for the direction of Water, "*splendour of light*" for the direction of the rising Sun in the East and Air, and the line "*Kingdom of Fire*" for the direction of Fire and the God. "*True desire*" pertains to Spirit.



Notes

[1] Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar, The Balance Between Mind and Magic*, Llewellyn, 2003, pp. 69-83.

[2] Cited in Naomi Ozaniec, *The Aquarian Qabalah, A Contemporary Initiation into a Secret Tradition*, Watkins Publishing, 2003 p.303.

[3] See Charles G. Leland, *Aradia, Gospel of the Witches*, Phoenix Publishing Inc. 1999, pp. 18-20.

[4] Symbolically these deities are dwellers in two realms; one with direct experience of the light, the other without. On one level they can be used as a symbol of the link between the spiritual and the earthly.

[5] Those that want complete and comprehensive courses in this important subject could try those given by Beezlebub at www.gnosticweb.com/netclasses/.

Chapter Seven: Astrology, Part One

Astrology, Part One

Welcome to the Class!

To complete this chapter you will need to have to hand your date of birth, an atlas, an Ephemeris [1], a Table of Houses, a pen and possibly a calculator.

This topic has been divided into two lessons so as to give adequate time to digest the subject matter and learn to perform astrological calculations. Astrology is one of the fields of expertise that a Witch may choose to specialise in. Even for the non-specialist it still has a great importance as it underpins much magical theory and practice (see, for example, the subject of Moon Magic in *Wicca Revealed*). I firmly believe that any Witch should know the basics of Astrology and be competent enough in the subject to create a natal or birth chart.

In this lesson you will learn about:

The basics of Astrology and how to make preliminary calculations for a natal or birth chart.

Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete.

There are also further magical areas for you to work on.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Introduction

The term "Astrology" comes from the Greek *astro*, meaning "star" and *logos* meaning "word" or "study".

For most of its history the subject of Astrology has had two distinct branches. The first may be termed "Natural Astrology", which dealt with observing celestial phenomena such as eclipses, comets and movements of the planets, whilst the second was "Judicial Astrology", concerned with the effects of heavenly bodies on human affairs. "Natural Astrology" became the science of Astronomy after the Copernican Revolution in the sixteenth century [2], while the "Judicial" branch became Astrology in the modern-day sense of the word.

History

Astrology pervades all cultures and all times throughout recorded history. The Ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Mayans, Aztecs and Tibetans once had their own systems, whilst in India and China traditions that are thousands of years old are still flourishing.

The European tradition of Astrology seems to have has its roots in Ancient Babylonia around 3000 BCE [3]. 2,600 years later it eventually found its way to Greece and was then transmitted to Rome and Hellenized Egypt [4]. With the Islamic conquests in North Africa and Europe, Astrology was assimilated into Arab culture and developed further throughout the seventh and thirteenth centuries. By the Renaissance, astrologers were commonplace in royal circles, one of the last of these being the well known magician John Dee [5]. Many now famous personages, who are acknowledged as the founding fathers of modern Astronomy, such as Galileo Galilei, Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler [6], were once practicing astrologers.

Although no longer a university subject, and having lost ground to Astronomy in intellectual circles, Astrology enjoyed a resurgence in the nineteenth century, a development that coincided with the discovery of Eastern religious thought, Spiritualism and a revival of interest in magic. The most notable author of this time was Alan Leo (1860-1917), a British astrologer who came up with the idea that the planets and stars influenced the development of an individual throughout his or her life [7].

However, it was in the New World in the early twentieth century that Astrology became most widely accessible due to the influence of a variety of authors, the best known probably being Evangeline Adams [8]. The popular press also played a huge part in bringing Astrology to the masses in the form of simplified horoscopes from 1930. Once the preserve of priesthoods, or a learned elite, Astrology is currently enjoying its most widespread popularity despite the findings of modern science that pours scorn on most of its claims [9].

The Basic Framework

Information in this section of the lesson should be memorised as it will make further astrological work much easier later on in the course.

Astrology has three basic component parts:

1. The Planets -these can be seen as energies, forces, life principles or basic human functions.
2. The Signs -these can be seen as the way we will direct or use these energies or life principles.
3. The Houses -these can be seen as what area the force will act in.

These three areas are interwoven in astrological interpretation.

For example:

Mars in Leo, Sixth House =Self assertive energetic activity (the qualities of the planet Mars), the nature of which will be powerful and impressive (the qualities of the Leo Sign), in the general area of community or health efficiency (the qualities of the Sixth House).

Venus in Gemini, Fourth House =Uniting activity (the qualities of the planet Venus), that will be adaptive and variable in nature (the qualities of the Gemini Sign), in the general area of self, possessions, emotions or relationships as a basis for new growth (the qualities of the Fourth House).

By the end of the two Astrology lessons you will have learnt enough to be successful in combining these three areas and be able to use this information to interpret a variety of charts and tables.

The Planets

In Astrology these include the Sun and the Moon. They are:

The Sun (also known as Sol)

Mercury

Venus

The Moon (also known as Luna)

Mars

Jupiter

Saturn

Neptune

Uranus

Pluto

It is a good idea to build up your own associations for each of the planets and it should be remembered that for the Ancients they were synonymous with gods and goddesses. Here I give a very basic breakdown of their qualities so that you can make a start:

Planet	Quality
Sun (Sol)	Self Integration, wholeness of being.
Mercury	Communication, mental and nervous co-ordination, transmission, fluidity.
Venus	Uniting activity, sympathy, evaluation, feeling.
Moon (Luna)	Rhythms, instinctive responses, assimilation, reflection.
Mars	Activity, enterprise, self assertive, energetic energy.
Jupiter	Expansion, growth, material gain, increase of wisdom.
Saturn	Formation, restriction, discipline, rigidity.

Planet	Quality
Uranus	Invention, independence, far-reaching change.
Neptune	Refinement through dissolution, subtlety, immateriality.
Pluto	Transformative through elimination, renewal.

The Moon's North and South Nodes also need to be included in this section as they can be assigned quasi-planetary values. Nodes are points in celestial longitude, always directly opposite each other, where the Moon crosses over the path of the Sun (or the ecliptic). The North Node signifies increase and gain, whilst its southern counterpart indicates decrease and release.

Dignities, Exaltations and Detriments

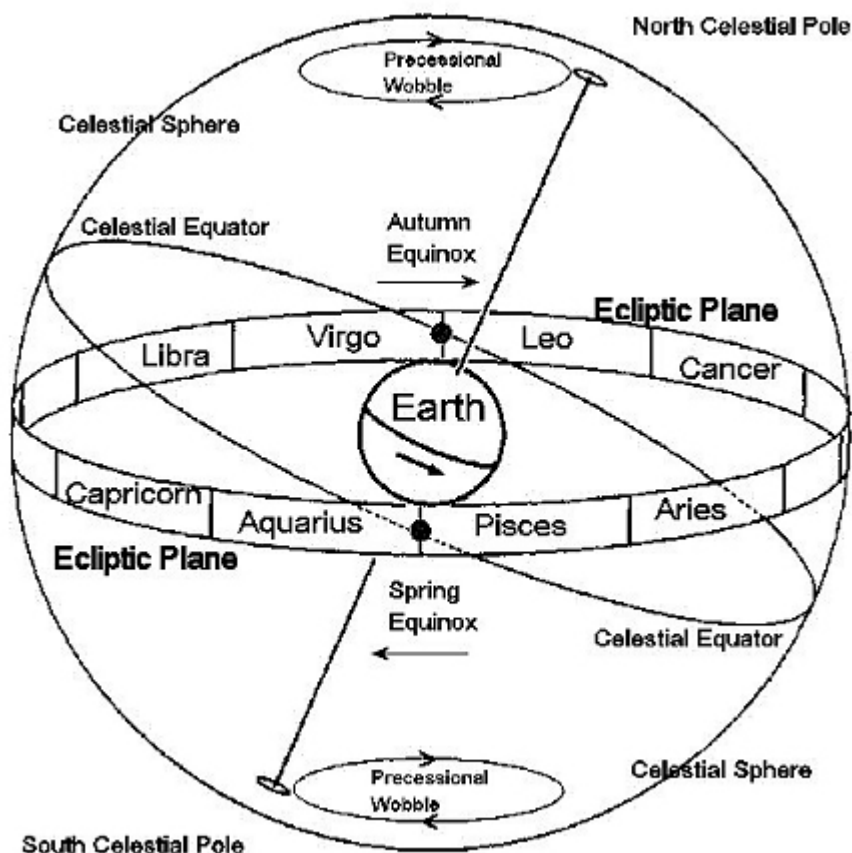
Each planet is said to rule one or more of the Zodiac Signs, and is in its dignity when it does so. A Planet also has one Sign, apart from the one(s) it rules, where it expresses itself in a comparable way, this is known as the Sign of the planet's exaltation. When a planet is in a Sign directly opposite to its dignity it is said to be in its detriment. And finally, when a planet is in a Sign opposite to its exaltation it is said to be in its fall. These factors are displayed in the table below:

Planet	Dignity	Detriment	Exaltation	Fall
Sun (Sol)	Leo	Aquarius	Aries	Libra
Mercury	Gemini, Virgo	Sagittarius, Pisces	Aquarius	Leo
Venus	Taurus, Libra	Scorpio, Aries	Pisces	Virgo
Moon (Luna)	Cancer	Capricorn	Taurus	Scorpio
Mars	Aries, Scorpio	Libra, Taurus	Capricorn	Cancer
Jupiter	Sagittarius, Pisces	Gemini, Virgo	Cancer	Capricorn
Saturn	Capricorn, Aquarius	Cancer, Leo	Libra	Aries
Uranus	Aquarius	Leo	Scorpio	Taurus
Neptune	Pisces	Virgo		
Pluto	Scorpio	Taurus		

Zodiac Signs

When we observe the Sun from the Earth it appears to move in a defined, restricted path, which astrologers term the “ecliptic”. The Zodiac is an imaginary belt seen to extend about 8° on either side of this feature and was originally designed to incorporate the planets known to Antiquity (the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). The Zodiac Signs came about when it was noted that the Sun made an annular journey through different constellations on the ecliptic plane and it was seen that there were twelve equal divisions to which could be assigned dates. In the 2nd-century CE Ptolemy gave each of these divisions a name based on the constellation present at that time [10]. However, the Earth wobbles when it spins causing an effect called the “precession of the equinoxes” [11], as a result the constellations are no longer in their original positions. So, for example, the Zodiacal division of Aries is no longer in the constellation of that Sign; in fact it is currently in the constellation of Pisces [12]. Some astrologers in the Western Tradition base their calculations on the actual positions of these groups of stars; this is known as Sidereal Astrology. However, most use the Tropical System where each fixed Zodiac division represents an area of space and not a constellation as is commonly supposed [13].

The Zodiac



Technicalities aside, Zodiac Signs represent the way we will direct the energies of the planets.

The Sign whose dates we are born within is our Star Sign while the Sign that is on the Eastern horizon at the time of birth is called the Rising Sign or Ascendant.

The following table provides the most basic of outlines of the Zodiac and concentrates only on general themes. You will need to flesh out the qualities of each Star Sign over time.

Zodiac Sign	Dates	Essential Positive Qualities	Essential Negative Qualities
Aries	March 21st to April 19th	Impulsive, self assertive, restless, urgent, quick-thinking, passionate.	Impatient, overbearing, abrupt, capacity for violence, egotistical, lacking tact, selfish.
Taurus	April 20th to May 20th	Practical, reliable, enduring, patience, conserving, strong feelings, affectionate, sensual.	Fixed in opinions, materialistic, selfish, possessive, quick to anger, quarrelsome.
Gemini	May 21st to June 20th	Adaptable, communicative, versatile, restless, inquisitive, likes variety and change, chatty, light-hearted.	Inconsistent, flirtatious, changeable, lacking concentration, fickle, doesn't follow through.
Cancer	June 21st to July 22nd	Sensitive, resourceful, protective and loyal, sympathetic, emotional, shrewd, intuitive, good memory, impressionable to psychic influences.	Moody, sulkiness, poorly motivated, manipulative, over-emotional, too cautious, egocentric.
Leo	July 23rd to August 22nd	Powerfully expressive, forthright, broad-minded, generous, warm-hearted, leadership qualities, dignified, likes the big picture.	Conceited, egotistical, cruel and tyrannical, over bearing, pompous, childish.

Zodiac Sign	Dates	Essential Positive Qualities	Essential Negative Qualities
Virgo	August 23rd to September 22nd	Analytical, discriminating, practical; refined manners, tempered affection, efficient.	Critical, self-centred, stuck-up, finds fault too readily, hypochondriac.
Libra	September 23rd to October 22nd	Charming, kind, easy-going, diplomatic, co-operative, intelligent, balanced judgement, romantic, sentimental.	Ambivalent, sulky, loves intrigue, inconsistent, gives up easily, will make peace at any cost, overly sentimental.
Scorpio	October 23rd to November 21st	Intensity of thought and expression, strong will, magnetic personality, strong reasoning faculty, imaginative, intuitive, analytical.	Jealous, violent, untrustworthy, distrustful, secretive, domineering, temperamental.
Sagittarius	November 22nd to December 21st	Freedom and space loving, optimistic, sincere, frank, idealistic, jovial, benevolent, intellectual, open-minded, good judgement.	Procrastinating, quarrelsome, takes risks, garrulous, exaggerates, lacking patience, lacking tact.
Capricorn	December 22nd to January 21st	Patient, cautious, methodical, resourceful, prudent, conscientious, dutiful, industrious.	Egotistical, inhibited, too conscious of status, sulky, slow to forgive, overbearing.

Zodiac Sign	Dates	Essential Positive Qualities	Essential Negative Qualities
Aquarius	January 20th to February 18th	Strong ideals, humanitarian, original, progressive in thought, intense energy, interested in science, artistic, friendly.	Shy, fixed viewpoint, unpredictable, temperamental, unpredictable, aloof, unruly.
Pisces	February 19th to March 20th	Emotionally sensitive, compassionate, kind, sympathetic, easy-going, impressionable, psychic, intuitive, lovable.	Poorly motivated, talking too much, procrastinating, hesitant, pessimistic, impractical, fearful, melancholic.

There are a variety of ways that the Zodiac Signs can be divided up:

They can be seen to encompass the whole year:

1. Aries, Taurus, Gemini -spring
2. Cancer, Leo, Virgo -summer
3. Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius -autumn
4. Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces –winter

They can also be divided into Quadriplicities and Triplicities:

Quadriplicities

The Quadriplicities are the four Cardinal Signs, the four Fixed or Kerubic Signs and the four Mutable or changeable Signs. Thus:

Cardinal =Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn

Fixed =Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius

Mutable =Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius and Pisces

Triplicities

The Triplicities are the Zodiac Signs categorised by the Four Elements:

Fire =Aries, Leo and Sagittarius

Water =Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces

Air =Libra, Aquarius and Gemini

Earth =Capricorn, Taurus and Virgo

Each of the Four Elements therefore has a Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable Sign in its category.

Planets and Zodiac Signs

Broadly speaking, planets function through the Zodiac Signs as in the table below:

Zodiac Sign	How a Planet Functions in the Sign
Aries	Objectively, urgently.
Taurus	Productively, enduringly.
Gemini	Adaptively, variably.
Cancer	Defensively, sensitively.
Leo	Powerfully, impressively.
Virgo	Analytically, critically.
Libra	Communicatively, harmoniously.
Scorpio	Penetratingly, intensely.
Sagittarius	Extensively, freely.
Capricorn	Rationally, prudently.
Aquarius	Detachedly, unconventionally.
Pisces	Imprecisely, impressionably.

Putting Planets and Signs Together

You are now in a position to say how a planet will combine with a Sign.

For example, Venus in Aries will combine the planet's uniting ability along with its sympathetic and evaluative qualities with the objective and urgent qualities of the Star Sign. A possible interpretation of Venus in Aries might be an urgent coming together of forces in a way that meets the needs of all.

If we consider Mars in Pisces this combination unites the action, enterprise, self-assertive and energetic energy of the planet with the imprecise and impressionable nature of the Star Sign. A possible interpretation of Mars in Pisces might therefore be that there will be lots of action and energy but the end result will be vague.

Houses

Houses are basically a way of dividing up the sky right around the Earth. There are a whole variety of ways of doing this but the one most commonly used by astrologers is the Equal House System [14], which creates twelve thirty degree segments around the Earth. Typically they are numbered from the Eastern horizon at the time of a particular observation. So the First House would be the division just about to rise and the Sixth House would have just set at the time a horoscope is cast. Each House represents an area of human life. Traditionally the first six Houses have a personal relevance, while the last six relate to external matters or other people.

Each House is said to have something of the nature of a Sign and a planet.

House	Area of Life	Sign	Planet
1	An independent sense of self, well-being.	Aries	Mars
2	Possessions, feelings, personal security.	Taurus	Venus
3	Environment, early education, siblings, transport.	Gemini	Mercury
4	Home, possessions, home-life, parents (in particular the mother).	Cancer	Moon
5	Self-expression, creativity, love, pleasure, father, children.	Leo	Sun
6	Health, work, service to the community, hobbies.	Virgo	Mercury
7	Partnerships, relationships, friendships.	Libra	Venus
8	Self-sacrifice, sharing resources, investments, sex.	Scorpio	Pluto
9	New horizons, long-distance travel, higher education, religion, ideals.	Sagittarius	Jupiter
10	Status, responsibilities, ambition, aspiration.	Capricorn	Saturn

11	Group objectives, socialising, friends, social conscience.	Aquarius	Uranus
12	Escapism, confinement, self-disintegration, institutions.	Pisces	Neptune

Combining Houses, Planets and Signs

If we think of the examples given above of combining planets and Signs we can now unite them with Houses.

Venus in Aries gave an urgent coming together of forces in a way that met the needs of all. If, for example, this happened in the Seventh House we could say that it would indicate a quick, satisfactory and positive conclusion to a matter concerning a partner or friend.

Mars in Pisces indicates a lot of action and energy but that the end result will be vague. If this combination was met with in the Fifth House it might mean that a lot of energy will be given to creative project or a lover but that the outcome will be less than pleasing.

A House does not always contain a planet, but this does not mean that there is no activity in that region. Astrologers commonly take into account the Sign present in a given House as well as the planet that rules that Sign.

A Couple of Technical Terms:

MC and IC

The Midheaven (in Latin the *medium coeli*), also known as the MC, is the Tenth House cusp at the top, or southern point, of a Zodiacal chart. Its opposite is the IC (in Latin the *imum coeli*) or Fourth House cusp at the Northernmost (lowest) point of a chart.

Decanate

A decanate is a ten degree subdivision or arc of the Zodiacal Wheel that gives a total of thirty six decans. Each House contains three decanates, known as the first, second and third decan.

Houses and Elements

Just like the Zodiac Signs the Houses can be divided by the Four Elements. Those who have several planets in any House or number of Houses will have something of the quality of their related Elements.

Element	Houses	Quality
Fire	First, Fifth, Ninth	Motivated, energised, inspirational, spiritual.
Water	Fourth, Eighth, Twelfth	Emotional, sensitive, intuitive.
Air	Third, Seventh, Eleventh	Communicative, sociable, intelligent.
Earth	Second, Sixth and Tenth	Practical, hard-working, stable.

Houses and Qualities

Houses can also be divided into three groups of four, where their qualities conform to the Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable Star Signs. However, the terms used when referring to the Houses are Angular, Succedent and Cadent.

Angular

The First, Fourth, Seventh and Tenth Houses correspond to the Cardinal Signs. When a planet is in an Angular House its power is magnified.

Succedent

The Second, Fifth, Eighth and Eleventh Houses correspond to the Fixed Signs. They can be called the Financial Houses. Planets in these Houses help create stability and resolution.

Cadent

The Third, Sixth, Ninth and Twelfth Houses correspond to the Mutable Signs. They can be referred to as the Mental Houses. Planets found here create adaptability and quick thinking.

Aspects

The last area that you need to know about before being able to begin calculations for a natal chart is that of the Aspects. Simply put Aspects determine the way that planets interact with the Signs and the Houses. Planets are said to be in Aspect when they are a defined amount of degrees away from one another in a Zodiacal chart. Some Aspects of planets are agreeable, whilst others conflict.

There are seven major Aspects (see the table on the next page):

Name of Aspect	Angle in Degrees	Orb in Degrees	Basic Qualities	Notes
Conjunction 	0	7	Gives more emphasis to a Sign.	A conjunction of three or more planets is known as a <i>stellium</i> .
Trine 	120	7	Denotes an easy interaction between two or more planets.	When three planets are in Trine it is known as a Grand Trine. If they are all in Signs of the same Element the Grand Trine becomes named after it. For example, if the planets were positioned in Fire Signs this would be known as a Grand Fire Trine.
Sextile 	60	5	Compatibility and exchange. Blending and integration.	
Square 	90	7	Tension between the energies of planets creating tension.	When three planets are involved, two of which are in opposition, this feature is referred to as a T-Square. A Grand Square involves four planets in opposing pairs.
Opposition 	180	7	Stalemate between the two energies of planets. Possible to reconcile and balance if other favourable factors are present. If not the planets cancel each other out.	
Semi-Sextile 	30	1	Weak support, lacking true communication.	
Inconjunct (also known as a Quincunx) 	150	5	Planets have nothing in common with each other and therefore produce a subtle inharmonious energy.	

The “orb” is the permissible number of degrees difference from the exact angle of any given Aspect; obviously the closer the amount of degrees the stronger the effect. When an Aspect is spot-on it is known as *partile*; a weak Aspect is referred to as *platic*.

Creating a Natal Chart

With these basics learnt, it is now possible to create a natal or birth chart. Before doing this for anyone else it is always a good idea to make one for yourself. To demonstrate how to create a chart I am going to use the birth data of two fictitious characters called Gerald and Phoebe. In this chapter we will only be dealing with the preliminary calculations; in the next lesson you will be shown how to calculate the position of the planets and set the chart up.

For your convenience the preliminary calculations have been divided into seven steps. As each step is completed it should be recorded on the special sheet found as Appendix One at the end of this chapter. I suggest that you repeat the calculations and create a sheet each for Gerald and Phoebe. When you have worked through these examples you can then create a sheet for yourself.

Step One: Time of Birth

It is crucial to the making of a good natal chart to have as accurate a time of birth as possible. Just the day of birth isn't really precise enough, although some success can still be enjoyed if all you know is that the birth was in the morning, afternoon, evening or night.

Gerald's date of birth is 07/09/1966 at 1 A.M Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Phoebe is born on 03/02/1978 at 2 PM in New York.

This information should be recorded on separate forms.

Step Two: Finding Longitude and Latitude

Next the longitude and latitude of the place of birth needs to be found out. Typically this measurement is given in degrees, minutes and seconds. In the past it meant looking up long lists of locations in a well equipped atlas, the problem often being that such a book rarely listed small villages. These days the information can be quickly extracted from a good quality computer atlas [15], or even a GPS receiver, which can provide very accurate positions.

Gerald's birth location was Maidstone, Kent, England which is at:

Latitude: 51° 16' 00" N

Longitude: 0° 31' 00" E

Phoebe was born in downtown New York, USA which is at:

Latitude: 40° 41' 00"

Longitude: 74° 00' 00"

This information is also recorded on Gerald's and Phoebe's form.

Step Three: Convert Local Time to Greenwich Meantime

Fortunately for our calculations Gerald was born in the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) zone. Most people are not. In an Ephemeris, a book used in astrological calculations, all planetary calculations are based on GMT and therefore everyone who does not reside in the GMT zone will need to convert their birth time. This can be done by looking at a table of Longitude Time Correction (which has been prepared for you at the end of the chapter, see Appendix Two) Look for the longitude of the person being considered, if west of the Prime Meridian [16] at Greenwich, add the amount of time, if east subtract it. You will also need to take into account any added Daylight Saving Time.

When converting the local birth time to GMT the birth date may change either forwards or backwards a day, make sure that this is correct and then write it down. From now on we will use the GMT time and date in our calculations.

Gerald's GMT remains the same.

For Phoebe a longitude of 74° W is 4 hours fifty six minutes behind GMT so we must add this figure to her 2PM birth time giving a result of 18 hours 56 minutes. That is, when it was 2PM or 14.00 hours in New York it was 18.56 in Greenwich.

Put both sets of information on separate forms.

Step Four: Find Sidereal Time for Greenwich on the Birth Date

The Local Sidereal Time is then found by converting GMT into Sidereal Time (ST). Sidereal Time refers to the actual time taken by the Earth to complete a total revolution on its axis.

First we find the ST at noon GMT on the date of birth.

By looking up in an Ephemeris we can see that on the 7th of September 1966 the Sidereal Time at noon on Gerald's birthday was:

11 04 27

For Phoebe it was:

20 53 15

This is also entered onto the forms.

The ST must then be converted to the GMT time of birth.

As Gerald was born eleven hours before noon we must *subtract* this interval of time from the ST.

This gives a ST of 00 04 27

Those that were born in the afternoon will of course *add* this interval of time to the ST.

For Phoebe it becomes $20\ 53\ 15 + 2 = 22\ 53\ 00$

Step Five: Acceleration of the Time Interval

ST represents a clock that seems to gain about four minutes a day. This is known as the “acceleration of the time interval”. If the difference between the GMT and the ST is greater than three hours then it needs to be added or subtracted to the calculation based on the table below (This table will also be found as Appendix Three).

Time Interval	Time to add or subtract
Less than 3 hours	0
Between 3 and 9 hours	1 minute
Between 9 and 15 hours	2 minutes
Between 15 and 21 hours	3 minutes
Between 21 and 24 hours	4 minutes

Gerald was born 11 hours before the ST at noon. Therefore we need to subtract 2 minutes.

This now gives an ST of 00 02 27 had he been born at Greenwich, England.

Phoebe was born 2 hours after the ST at noon, but the time interval is less than 3 hours therefore nothing is added. Her ST is still 22 53 15.

Step Six: Adjusting the ST for Local Time at the Actual Place of Birth

The above calculations are based on Greenwich and they must now be adjusted for their specific locations.

To do this we must convert the degrees, minutes and seconds of longitude of the place of birth into time. We can do this by referring again to the Table of Longitude Time Correction (Appendix Two) or by multiplying the longitude by 4

[17]. The resulting figure is *subtracted* for places West of Greenwich and *added* for locations East of Greenwich.

Gerald's ST = 00 02 27. He was born 31 minutes or roughly half of one degree East of Greenwich. This means an adjustment of 2 minutes, 4 seconds (4x 31). Because he was born East we must add this time. Gerald's new ST is 00 04 31.

Phoebe has a ST of 22 53 15. She was born at a longitude of 74°. 74 x 4 gives 296 minutes or 4 hours 56 minutes. As she was born to the West of Greenwich this means we must subtract this figure from her ST, giving her a local ST of 17 57 15.

Please note: If the ST is greater than 24 hours take away 24 from the end result, if the longitude equivalent must be subtracted, and is greater than the ST (which will give a minus figure), add on 24 hours to the ST before doing the calculation.

This information can now be entered on the birth chart form.

Optional Step: Calculating the ST in the Southern Hemisphere

To determine the local Sidereal Time in the Southern Hemisphere an additional calculation is needed. Any point in the Northern Hemisphere is separated from its opposite by 12 hours in the Southern Hemisphere.

If we assume Gerald and Phoebe were born at the same latitude in the South we add 12 hours.

Gerald's ST would be $00\ 02\ 27 + 12\ 00\ 00 = 12\ 02\ 27$

Phoebe's would become $20\ 54\ 15 + 12\ 00\ 00 = 32\ 54\ 15$

Here though a difficulty will be noticed there is no such time as 32 hours. When the hour column is in excess of 24 we have to subtract 24 hours. This is because Sidereal Time starts again at 0 hours after it reaches 24. Phoebe's new ST will therefore be:

08 54 15

Step Seven: The Ascendant and Midheaven (MC)

We are now nearly ready to set up our natal charts.

The last thing that needs to be calculated is the Ascendant and Midheaven.

These are found by referring to a Table of Houses.

Next to the ST is found the MC or Tenth House column. Find the ST in the table that is closest to the ST that has been calculated. Then look across into the adjacent column to find the MC.

Next read down the relevant latitude column until the point that it intercepts the relevant ST row. Here will be found the Ascendant.

Both these figures are rounded up or down as necessary to the nearest whole degree.

A ST of 00 04 31 gives Gerald an MC of Aries 1° and Cancer in the Ascendant at $27^{\circ} 16'$, or 27° (after rounding down).

Phoebe's ST of 17 58 15 gives an MC of Sagittarius/Capricorn Cusp (30° Sagittarius/ 0° Capricorn) and an Ascendant of Pisces/Aries Cusp (30° Pisces/ 0° Aries).

Research Project

There are a number of things to be done for this lesson's research project.

Make sure that you have found your birth data and performed all the necessary calculations so that you are ready next lesson to construct your natal chart. It is important to be as familiar as possible with the calculation process and, although it looks dreadfully complex at first, once you have performed several calculations it will actually become second nature. It is a good idea to work out the astrological data for some of your family and friends as well. Many will enjoy being presented with a natal chart constructed by you and it will improve your skills no end if you become a personal astrologer for others.

Begin to find out about the Star Signs and planets in detail. This is a life-time's work but you have to start somewhere. Research astrological books and resources on the internet to find out about their qualities. More than this though, gather mythical and astronomical data about them. The more you know about these things the better an astrologer you will eventually be.

Get a pocket book on the stars and planets that contains information about when they can be seen in the sky and actually go out and look at the constellations and planets.

Exercises

Attunement to the Planets

This month I would like you to begin to experiment with using planetary energies within your regular magical work.

Each of the planets has its own particular powers that esoteric astrologers [18] believe influences life on the Earth. Witches already make great use of the Sun and have a special affinity with the Moon, but it is possible to branch out and work with the other planetary forces, which gives a refinement to much magical work. For example, a spell about communication can be aided by Mercury, whilst a spell for happiness might call upon the energies of Jupiter.

Goddess And God Forms

One of the easiest ways for a Witch to work with celestial forces is to imagine that they are goddesses and gods from Antiquity that can be invoked within a circle: Mercury (or Hermes) for matters of wisdom, Venus or Aphrodite for Love, Saturn for matters of time and so on. Prayers can be created to the various deities that help align the energies of the Witch with the planetary powers.

Planetary Spirits, Intelligences And Archangels

Another way of working with the Planets is through their Spirit and Angelic forces. Basically these are a tripartite hierarchical system; at the top are the Archangelic forces, followed by the Intelligences or Angels, whilst at the bottom are the Planetary Spirits [19].

The Spirits are blind forces that may be used as a Witch sees fit. They can be evoked into a triangle outside a circle. However Archangels and Angels should be invoked and must be worked with as they are both powers capable of having their own agenda.

Planets	Archangels	Intelligences	Spirits
Saturn	Tzafkiel	Agiel	Zaziel
Jupiter	Tzadkiel	Iophiel	Hasmiel
Mars	Kamael	Graphiel	Bartzbael
Sol	Raphael	Nachiel	Soras
Venus	Haniel	Hagiel	Kadmiel
Mercury	Michael	Tiriel	Taphthartharath
Luna	Gabriel	Tarshishim ve-ad Ruach Shechalim	Hasmodai

This kind of work is very much based on *The Key of Solomon the King* [20], where will be found a whole variety of pentacles specifically designed to align their user to a particular planet's various spirit forces, as well as the use of Planetary Squares and sigils such as found in Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* [21], which can be used similarly. These can all be fairly readily incorporated into talismans; indeed they are often stamped on metal and sold as such in occult shops. Alternatively they can be drawn out and used to aid contact or alignment with celestial powers. Next lesson I will give more detailed information about working with Squares and sigils but in the meantime it will be a good idea to familiarise yourself with Agrippa's writings on this subject.

End Blessing

Well done! You have now completed the seventh lesson of the course. Astrology is an enormous subject in its own right but knowing the basics will open out much magical theory and symbolism in a surprising number of places as you will find that it is one of the cornerstones of Western magical practice.

It will also benefit you personally as it will give you the tools to see why things are as they are and allow you to identify areas of your life that may need to be worked on if the planetary Aspects are not favourable.

You now have a month in which to digest the material and complete the research project and incorporate the exercises into your life. Remember the School wants to hear how you got on. After this period an exam will be available On-line and upon taking this you will be able to advance to Lesson Eight.

May Astrology enrich your life and the lives of those around you as it shows you how to live your life in harmony with the great cosmic forces.

As always,

Love and Light

Blessed Be

And see you next lesson.

Appendices

Appendices to this chapter are copyright free and you may photocopy them should you wish.

Appendix One

Form to Aid the Creation of a Natal Chart

Name:

1a. Date of Birth

1b. Time of Birth

1c. Place of Birth

2a. Latitude

2b. Longitude

3. Convert Local Time to Greenwich Meantime at noon (put new date if altered by calculation). Look up the required Longitude on the Table of Zone Standard Times and the amount of time to add or subtract. If the longitude is W add if E subtract.

4. Calculate Sidereal Time for Greenwich on the birth date. Find ST for noon of birth date in an Ephemeris. If born before noon subtract amount of time interval, if born after noon add the time interval.

5. Adjusted ST after Acceleration of the Interval is taken into account. If born before noon subtract time according to the table. If born after noon add time according to the table.

6. ST Adjusted for Local Time at place of birth. Convert longitude of birthplace into time ($\times 4$), if W of Greenwich subtract, if E add to the ST. Add or subtract 24 hours if necessary.

6a. Optional: ST for Southern Hemisphere. Add 12 hours. Subtract 24 if necessary.

7. The Midheaven and Ascendant. Look up in a table of Houses. Reverse signs for Southern Hemisphere.

Appendix Two

Table of Longitude Time Correction											
Degrees									Minutes		
°	h	m	°	h	m	°	h	m	m	m	s
1	0	4	61	4	4	121	8	4	1	0	4
2	0	8	62	4	8	122	8	8	2	0	8
3	0	12	63	4	12	123	8	12	3	0	12
4	0	16	64	4	16	124	8	16	4	0	16
5	0	20	65	4	20	125	8	20	5	0	20
6	0	24	66	4	24	126	8	24	6	0	24
7	0	28	67	4	28	127	8	28	7	0	28
8	0	32	68	4	32	128	8	32	8	0	32
9	0	36	69	4	36	129	8	36	9	0	36
10	0	40	70	4	40	130	8	40	10	0	40
11	0	44	71	4	44	131	8	44	11	0	44
12	0	48	72	4	48	132	8	48	12	0	48
13	0	52	73	4	52	133	8	52	13	0	52
14	0	56	74	4	56	134	8	56	14	0	56
15	1	0	75	5	0	135	9	0	15	1	0
16	1	4	76	5	4	136	9	4	16	1	4
17	1	8	77	5	8	137	9	8	17	1	8
18	1	12	78	5	12	138	9	12	18	1	12
19	1	16	79	5	16	139	9	16	19	1	16
20	1	20	80	5	20	140	9	20	20	1	20

Table of Longitude Time Correction											
Degrees									Minutes		
°	h	m	°	h	m	°	h	m	m	m	s
21	1	24	81	5	24	141	9	24	21	1	24
22	1	28	82	5	28	142	9	28	22	1	28
23	1	32	83	5	32	143	9	32	23	1	32
24	1	36	84	5	36	144	9	36	24	1	36
25	1	40	85	5	40	145	9	40	25	1	40
26	1	44	86	5	44	146	9	44	26	1	44
27	1	48	87	5	48	147	9	48	27	1	48
28	1	52	88	5	52	148	9	52	28	1	52
29	1	56	89	5	56	149	9	56	29	1	56
30	2	0	90	6	0	150	10	0	30	2	0
31	2	4	91	6	4	151	10	4	31	2	4
32	2	8	92	6	8	152	10	8	32	2	8
33	2	12	93	6	12	153	10	12	33	2	12
34	2	16	94	6	16	154	10	16	34	2	16
35	2	20	95	6	20	155	10	20	35	2	20
36	2	24	96	6	24	156	10	24	36	2	24
37	2	28	97	6	28	157	10	28	37	2	28
38	2	32	98	6	32	158	10	32	38	2	32
39	2	36	99	6	36	159	10	36	39	2	36
40	2	40	100	6	40	160	10	40	40	2	40

Table of Longitude Time Correction											
Degrees									Minutes		
°	h	m	°	h	m	°	h	m	m	m	s
41	2	44	101	6	44	161	10	44	41	2	44
42	2	48	102	6	48	162	10	48	42	2	48
43	2	52	103	6	52	163	10	52	43	2	52
44	2	56	104	6	56	164	10	56	44	2	56
45	3	0	105	7	0	165	11	0	45	3	0
46	3	4	106	7	4	166	11	4	46	3	4
47	3	8	107	7	8	167	11	8	47	3	8
48	3	12	108	7	12	168	11	12	48	3	12
49	3	16	109	7	16	169	11	16	49	3	16
50	3	20	110	7	20	170	11	20	50	3	20
51	3	24	111	7	24	171	11	24	51	3	24
52	3	28	112	7	28	172	11	28	52	3	28
53	3	32	113	7	32	173	11	32	53	3	32
54	3	36	114	7	36	174	11	36	54	3	36
55	3	40	115	7	40	175	11	40	55	3	40
56	3	44	116	7	44	176	11	44	56	3	44
57	3	48	117	7	48	177	11	48	57	3	48
58	3	52	118	7	52	178	11	52	58	3	52
59	3	56	119	7	56	179	11	56	59	3	56
60	4	0	120	8	0	180	12	0	60	4	0

Appendix Three

Acceleration of the Interval: Time Addition

Time Interval	Time to Add or Subtract
Less than 3 hours	0
Between 3 and 9 hours	1 minute
Between 9 and 15 hours	2 minutes
Between 15 and 21 hours	3 minutes
Between 21 and 24 hours	4 minutes

Notes

[1] An On-line Ephemeris for the last 3,000 years can be found here <http://www.khaldea.com/ephemcenter.shtml>.

[2] Copernicus (1473-1543) advanced the idea that the planets revolve in orbits around the Sun, that the Earth was a planet, and that it spun on its North-South axis from west to east at the rate of one rotation per twenty four hours. It overturned the Ptolemaic system that stated that the Earth was stationary and the centre of the Universe.

[3] The earliest complete astrological work known to have survived from antiquity is the *Venus Tablet* dating from the reign of the Babylonian monarch Amisaduqa, around 1650 BCE. Astrology may, of course, be far older as Neolithic carvings of Moon phases on antler horn and stone seem to indicate.

[4] It should be made clear that this was not the same as the Astrology of the Ancient Egyptians; their tradition was more an astral theology than a predictive art.

[5] Dee (1527-1609) was an astrologer to Queen Elizabeth 1 (1533-1603) of England. His mixed fortunes at the court indicate that Astrology was being left behind in favour of a more scientific approach to life and that royal astrologers were a dying breed.

[6] Galileo (1564-1642) amongst many notable scientific discoveries and inventions discovered Moons orbiting Jupiter lending support to the Copernican system that bodies revolve round an object. Brahe (1546-1601) made precise observations of the Solar System and over seven hundred stars. Kepler (1571-1630) formulated laws of planetary motion.

[7] Leo was a Theosophist and wrote the book *Esoteric Astrology*.

[8] Adams (1868-1932) wrote several books on Astrology as well as running a successful consultancy. In her youth she had known Aleister Crowley. She was twice taken to court for fortune telling in 1911 and 1914. The 1914 case set a legal precedent for the non-criminality of professional Astrology.

[9] A well written sceptical article can be found at <http://skepdic.com/astrology.html> lists many of the chief objections.

[10] Ptolemy (90-168 CE) lived in Hellenized Roman Egypt. He gave the same names for the Zodiac Signs that we use today in his work the *Tetrabiblos*.

[11] The precession of the equinoxes is a cycle that takes 26,000 years to complete. In around 24,000 years the signs will be (nearly) back as they were in Ptolemy's day.

[12] Aries retrogrades around 1° every 70 years.

[13] See Julia and Derek Parker, *Parkers' Astrology: the Definitive Guide to using Astrology in every Aspect of your Life*, DK, 2003, p.18 for confirmation of this. 0°

Aries, the Zodiac start point, is perceived to be when the Sun crosses over from the Southern Hemisphere to the Northern Hemisphere each year; this point retrogrades by 1° annually against the star background.

[14] Others include the Quadrant System, the Time System of Placidus, the System of Koch and the System of Porphyry.

[15] *Microsoft Encarta World Atlas*, for instance.

[16] The Prime Meridian is 0° longitude.

[17] The Sun takes four minutes to travel 1° or 60 seconds of longitude. Consider two people born at exactly the same time GMT, 1° in longitude either side of the Prime Meridian in Greenwich. If born one degree East of Greenwich the time would in fact be further on by four minutes. If born one degree West of Greenwich the Sun won't have travelled so far and will in fact be four minutes behind.

[18] Esoteric astrologers explain the influence of the planets in spiritual terms; this differs from mainstream Astrology that often talks of gravitational influences, electromagnetic fields and other more scientifically based rationalisations.

[19] This is based on Golden Dawn magic. There are other ways of dividing up planetary powers, both Theosophists and Rosicrucians, for example, differ in their approach.

[20] See S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, *The Key of Solomon the King*, Weiser, 1974, pp. 66-79. A free On-line version is available here:
<http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/ksol.htm>

[21] Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Donald Tyson, Ed., *Three Book of Occult Philosophy*, Llewellyn, 2004, pp. 321-7. An unedited free version of the text may be found On-line at <http://www.esotericarchives.com/agrippa/index.html>.

Chapter Eight: Astrology, Part Two

Astrology, Part Two

Welcome to the Class!

To complete this lesson you will need to have to hand an Ephemeris, a Table of Proportional Logarithms (generally found at the back of an Ephemeris), a pen and a calculator.

By the end of this chapter you will be able to construct and interpret a natal chart having done all the required calculations and placing of the planets.

In this lesson you will learn:

How to calculate the planets' positions, how to work out the Aspects and understand their significance, and how to go about interpreting a natal chart.

Following on from this there is a research project for you to complete.

There are also further magical items for you to work on.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

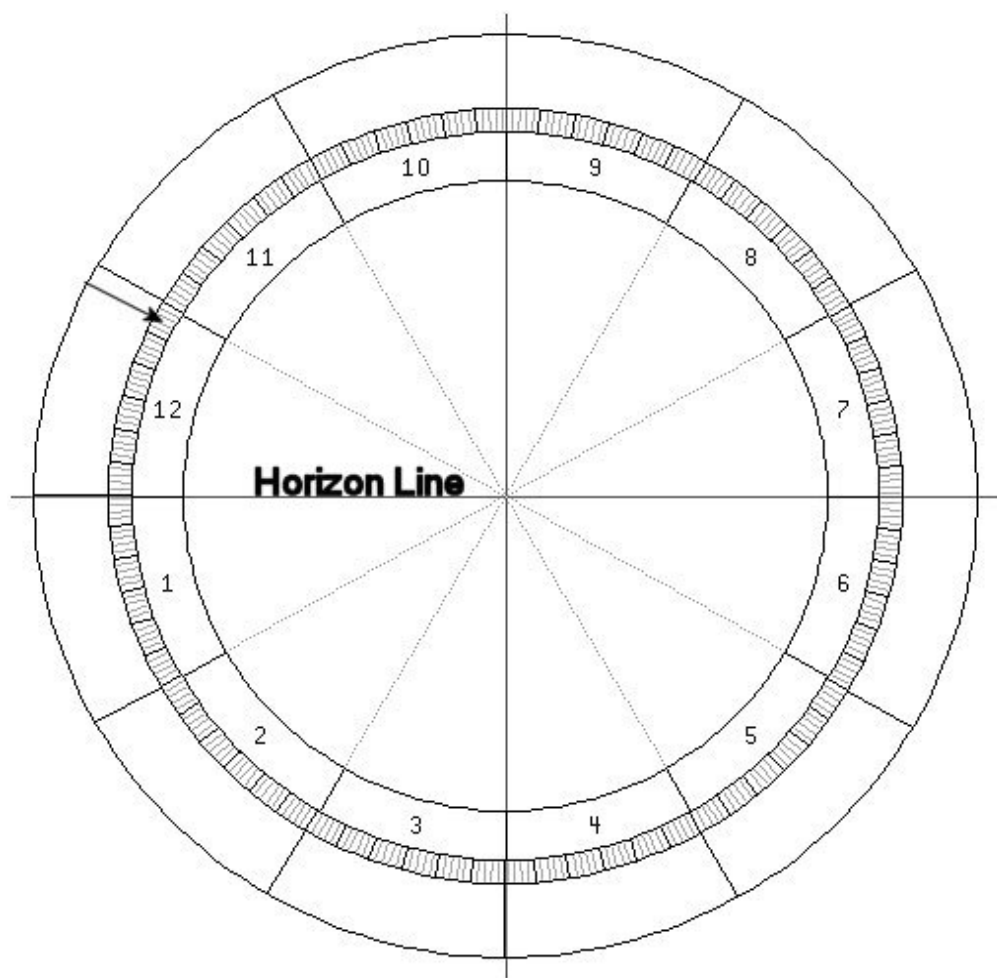
Introduction

Having completed the last lesson you will have done all the initial calculations necessary up to the point of having worked out the Ascendant and the Midheaven. These must now be marked on a blank chart (you will find a copy of this in Appendix One). To demonstrate this we will work with Gerald's data from last lesson.

Gerald's information was:

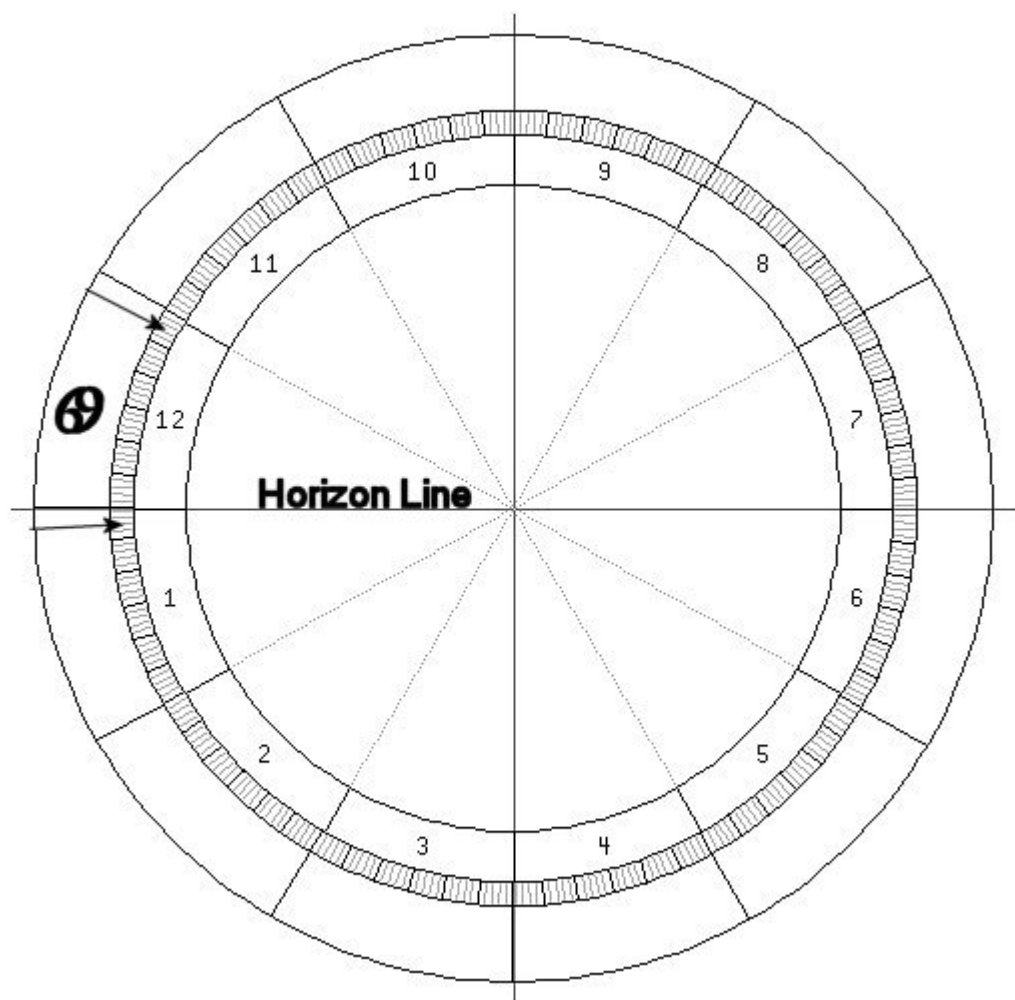
Ascendant: Cancer 27°, MC: Aries 1°

On the left hand side of the chart we must mark on the Ascendant Star Sign. Count up 27 degrees from the horizon line and place a mark:

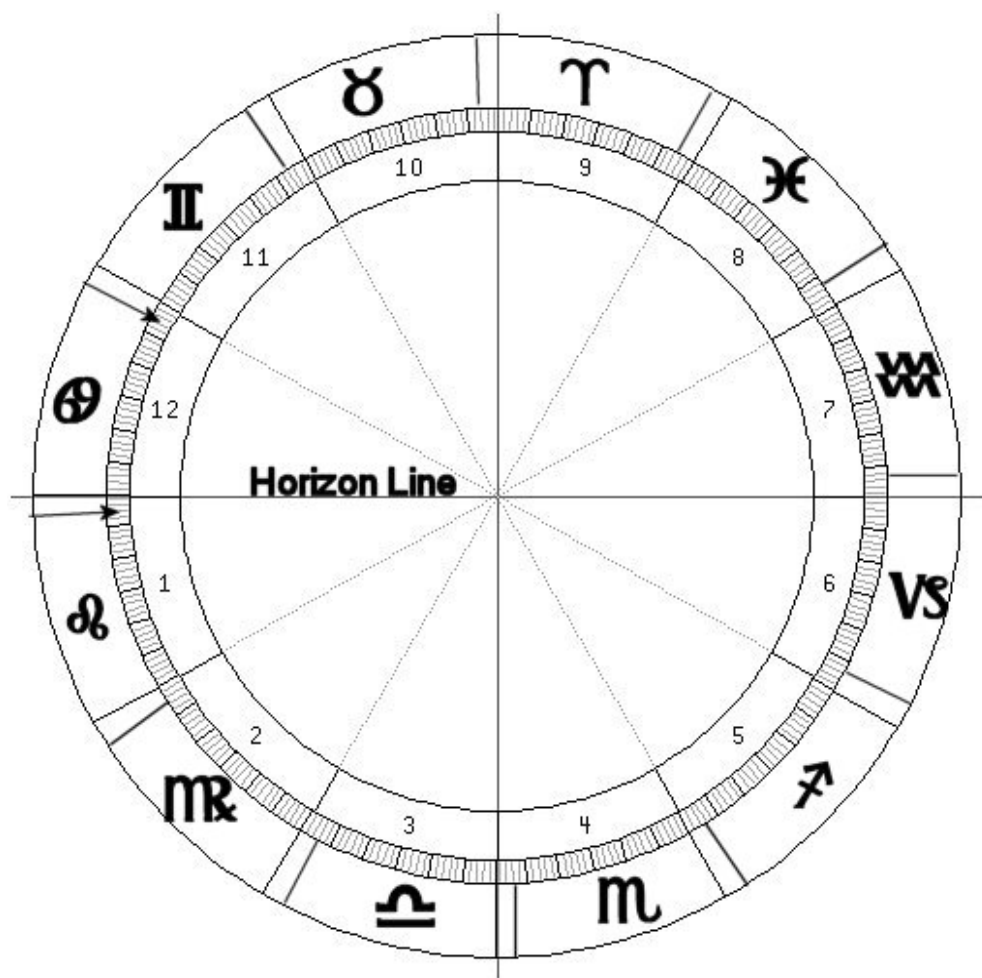


The black arrow marks the fact that Cancer has risen by 27°

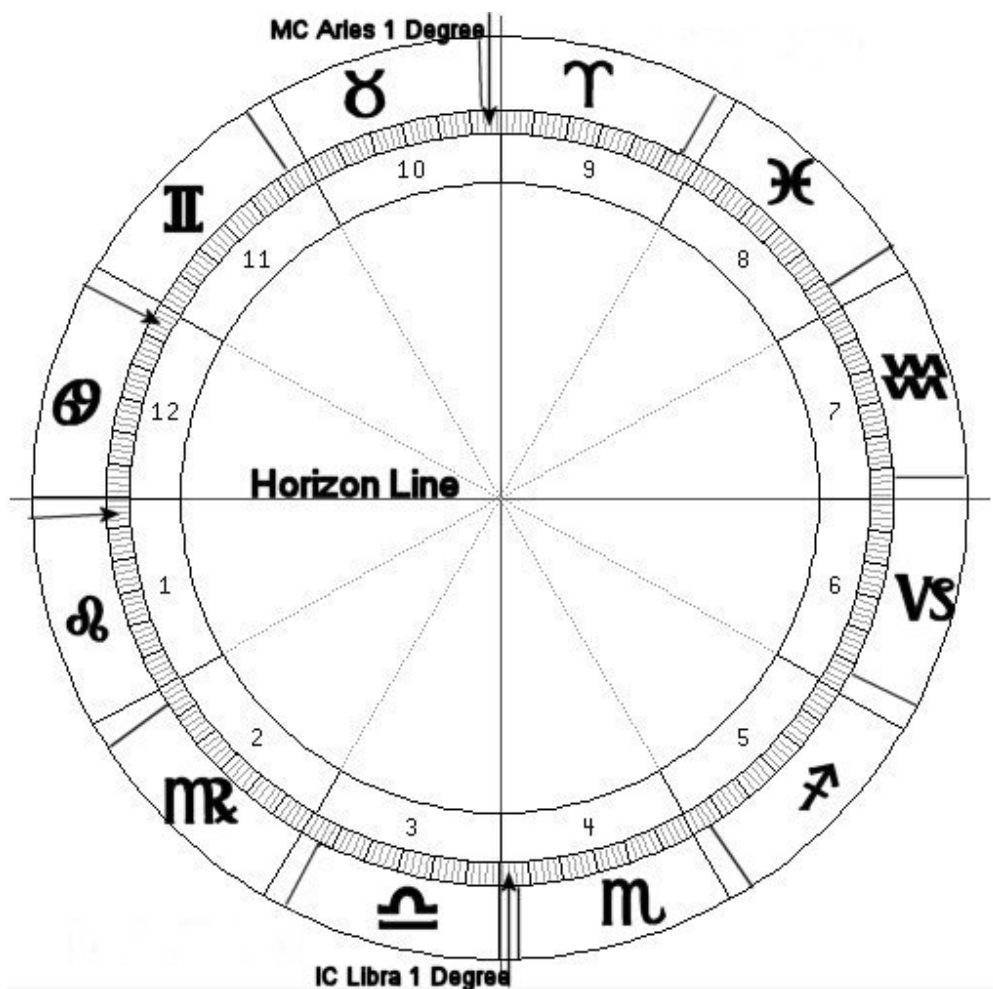
Each Star Sign occupies a 30° segment of sky so we will now place a line below the horizon that makes up the remaining 3° of Cancer. We then place the symbol for this Sign in the middle of the segment.



To place on the rest of the Star Signs is easy. We now write them in every thirty degrees, remembering that Gemini would have risen before Cancer and that Leo follows the Sign of the Crab.



Next we mark on the MC or Midheaven and then the *Imum Coeli* or IC at the opposite end of the chart.

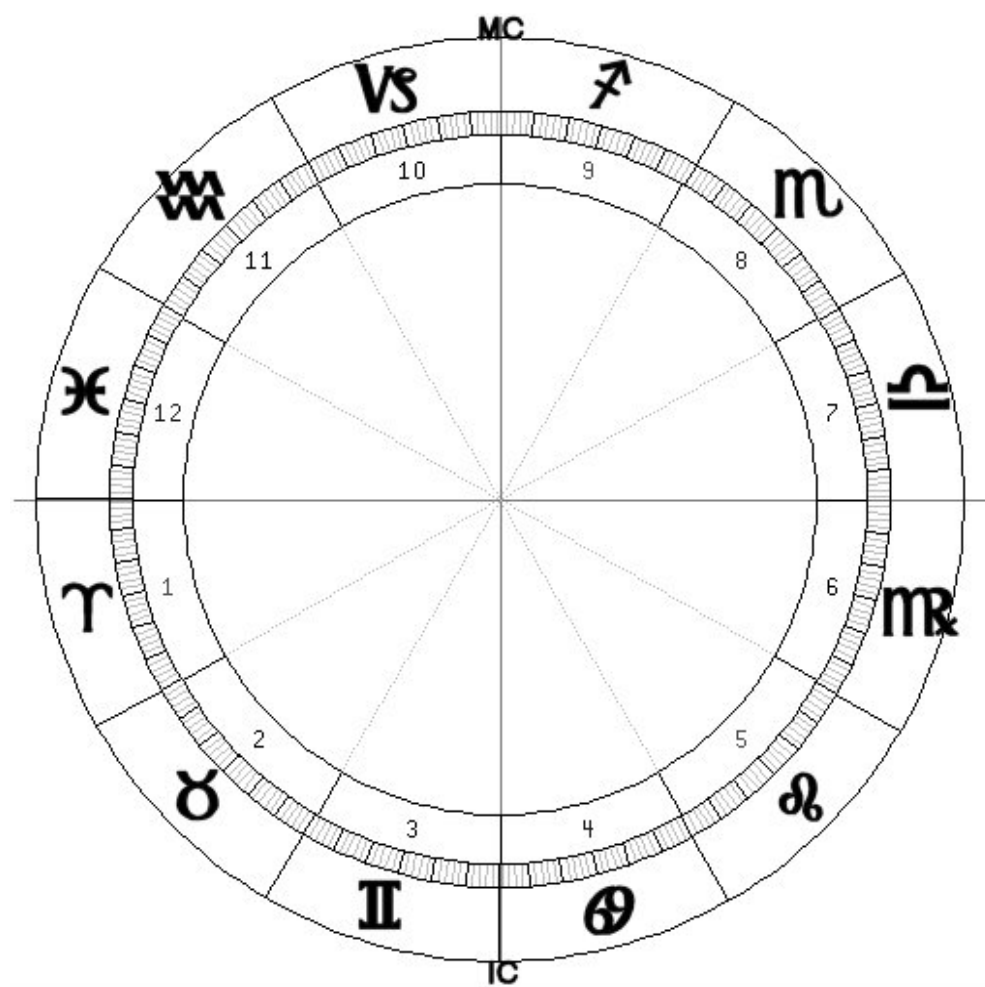


In case you were wondering what Phoebe's chart looks like we have prepared it already:

Phoebe's details were:

Ascendant: Aries/Pisces Cusp

MC: Sagittarius/Capricorn Cusp



Finding the Position of the Planets at Birth

An Ephemeris typically lists the position of the planets at noon [1] on the Prime Meridian at Greenwich. These must be converted to the positions at a person's local birth time. This only need be done for the quicker moving planets (the Sun, Mercury, Venus, the Moon and Mars) as the others move so slowly that there will be no appreciable difference. At first the calculations look terribly daunting; in fact the mathematics is very simple. I would suggest that the best thing to do is work through the two examples given below and then try the calculations with your own birth data.

In all there are eight steps to working out the position of the planets (there is a form in Appendix Two that may be used to aid the calculations):

Step One: Find the GMT interval from birth to noon

This measurement is the amount of time difference between the local birth time and the time in Greenwich.

Gerald was born at 1AM GMT at a longitude of $0^{\circ} 31' 00''$ E. This longitude difference must be converted into time. Using the Longitudinal Time Conversion Table from last lesson, $0^{\circ} 31' 00''$ E gives a time correction of 2 minutes and 4 seconds. This must be subtracted as he was born east of Greenwich. He was therefore born at 00 57 56 AM GMT. This gives a time interval of 11 minutes 2 hours and 4 seconds until noon GMT. We can round this down to 11 hours 02 minutes.

Phoebe was born at 2 PM in New York. She was born at a longitude of $74^{\circ} 00' 00''$ W, which gives a time difference of 4 hours 56 minutes, this must be added to her birth time as she was born west of Greenwich. She was therefore born at 18 56 GMT. Her time interval is therefore 8 hours 56 minutes after noon.

Step Two: Find the 24 hour motion of the planets in degrees, minutes and seconds

This is worked out by finding the difference in degrees and minutes between each Planet's position for noon the day before the GMT birth time and noon the following day (**Please note:** It is possible that the GMT birth date will be different from the actual birth date.)

We will work this out for Gerald and Phoebe. Gerald was born September 7th 1966, his planetary positions and motions are:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Noon Time 07/09/1966	14° ♀ 24'27	11° ♀ 47'02	28° ♀ 9'09	7° ♀ 26'	8° ♀ 10'08
Noon Time 06/09/1966	13° ♀ 26'30	9° ♀ 51'04	26° ♀ 55'09	24° ♂ 52'19	7° ♀ 32'08
Motion in 24 hours	57'57	1° 55 '58	1° 14'	12° 34'19	42'

Note: There are 30 degrees allocated to each Star Sign. The Moon was at 24° 52' 19 in Taurus. Therefore it travelled through the remaining degrees of Taurus and then the first 7° 26' of Gemini. In all it has therefore travelled 12° 34' 19.

Phoebe was born on 3rd of February 1978.

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Noon 03/02/1978	14° ♀ 18'17	28° ♀ 12'09	17° ♀ 14'06	17° ♂ 14'50	26° ♂ 55'01
Noon Time 02/02/1978	13° ♀ 17'24	26° ♀ 41'05	15° ♀ 59'03	2° ♂ 49'47	27° ♂ R35'03
Motion in 24 hours	1° 00' 53	1° 31'04	1° 15'03	14°25'03	40'02

Note: Mars is in retrograde; the difference between noon on the 03/02/1978 and 02/02/1978 is 40'02.

Step Three: Use a table of proportional logarithms to find the log of the GMT interval

This table can be found at the back of *Raphael's Ephemeris* for any given year. Often students are intimidated by this feature, but it is in reality no more difficult to understand than a railway timetable.

For Gerald the GMT interval was 11 hours and two minutes.

Look along the top row until 11 is found and then down the left hand column until 2 minutes is reached, where the column and row intersect will be found the required log. **For Gerald the log is .3375.**

For Phoebe GMT interval was 8 hours 56 minutes

Look along the top row of hours until 8 is found, then look down the left hand column and find 56 minutes. **For Phoebe the log is .4292.**

Step Four: Find the logs of the planets’ motion

Look up the logs for the planets’ motion in the proportional logarithm table in the same way. Numbers may be rounded up or down to the nearest minute where appropriate.

For Gerald:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Motion	57’ 57 Round up to 58’	1°55’58 Round up to 1° 56’	1°14’	12°34’19 Round down to 12°34’	42’00
Log	1.3949	1.0939	1.2891	.2810	1.5351

For Phoebe:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Motion	1°00’53 Round up to 1°01’	1°31’04 Round down to 1° 31’	1°15’03 Round down to 1° 15’	14°25’ 03 Round down to 14° 25’	40’02 Round down to 40’
Log	1.3730	1.1993	1.2833	.2213	1.5563

Step Five: Work out the log of the motion of each planet combined with the GMT birth interval

For Gerald:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Log of Motion	1.3949	1.0939	1.2891	.2810	1.5351
Log of GMT birth interval	.3375	.3375	.3375	.3375	.3375
Combined Total	1.7324	1.4314	1.6226	.6185	1.8726

For Phoebe:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Log of Motion	1.3730	1.1993	1.2833	.2213	1.5563
Log of GMT birth interval	.4292	.4292	.4292	.4292	.4292
Combined Total	1.8022	1.6285	1.7125	.6505	1.9855

Step Six: Convert the combined log answers just worked out into degrees and minutes

We are now in a position to work out the degrees and minutes that the planets have travelled in the time interval between noon GMT and the actual birth time at the birth location. We convert the answers worked out above into degrees and minutes by looking them up on the proportional log table. This is done by finding the anti-log. Look up the log, then run your finger up the column for degrees and along the row for minutes. Use the log in the table that is closest to the figure you are looking up.

For Gerald:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Combined motion/birth interval log	1.7324	1.4314	1.6226	.6185	1.8726
Degree and minute equivalent of motion	27'	53'	34'	6° 38'	19'

For Phoebe:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Combined motion/birth interval log	1.8022	1.6285	1.7125	.6505	1.2865
Degree and minute equivalent of motion	23'	34'	28'	5° 22'	15'

Step Seven: We now either add or subtract the degree and minute equivalents of motion from the positions of the planets on the birth date.

Note: If born at an AM time the figure for the motion is subtracted, if born at a PM time the figure for the motion is added.

For Gerald born in the AM we subtract the motion:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Noon 07/09/1966	14° ♍ 24'27	11° ♍ 47'02	28° ♋ 09'09	7° ♊ 26'	8° ♋ 10'08
Motion	27'	53'	34'	5° 47'	19'
Position at local birth time	13° ♍ 57'27	10° ♍ 54'02	27° ♋ 35'09	1° ♊ 39'	7° ♋ 51'08

For Phoebe born in the PM we add the motion:

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Noon 03/02/1978	14° ☿ 18'17	28° ♀ 12.9'	17° ♀ 14'06	17° ☾ 14'50	26° ♀ 55'01
Motion	23'	34'	28'	5° 22'	15'
Position at local birth time	☿ 14°30'17	♀ 30.9'	17° ♀ 30'06	18° ☾ 12'50	26 ♀ °40'01

Note: If a planet's motion is retrograde, subtract the figures for PM births and add for AM. Phoebe was born in the PM so we subtract Mars' retrograde motion.

Step Eight: Finding the position of the other planets

The other planets move so little that we can use their positions for noon on the birth date given in the Ephemeris.

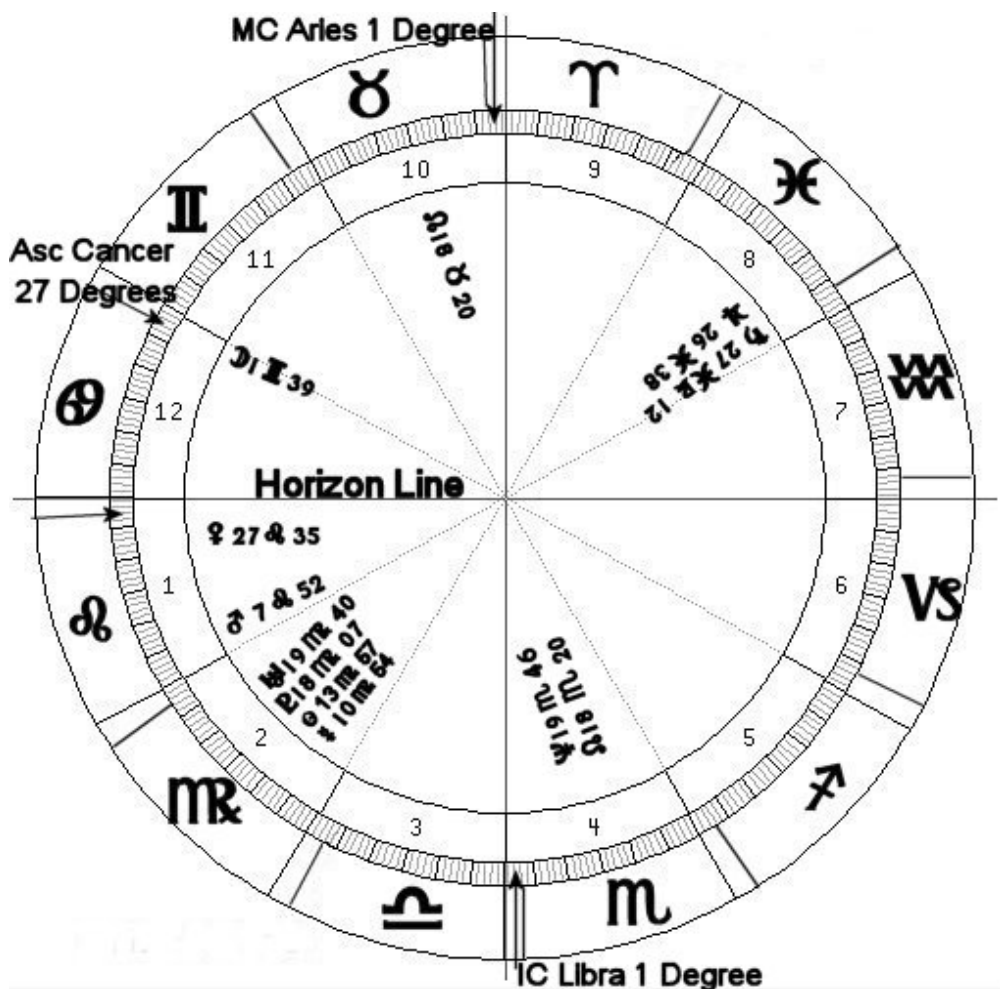
For Gerald:

	Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
Noon 07/09/1966	26° ♀ 38'	27° ♀ R12'	19° ♀ 40'	19° ♀ 46'	18° ♀ 07'

For Phoebe:

	Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
Noon 03/02/1978	26° ♀ R32'	28° ♀ R9'	16 ♀ °17'	17° ☾ 45'	16° ♀ R37'

It is now time to set these planets up onto a blank chart. We will do this just for Gerald (I would suggest that you print off the blank chart provided in Appendix One and complete this for Phoebe using the data so far collected).



Notice that we have also added the Moon's nodes.

Before interpretation can start we must do a quick survey of where the planets are and work out their relationship to the Star Signs and to each other.

Planets, Triplicities and Quadriplicities

The table below (available also as Appendix Three) is filled in to indicate the combination of the planets with the Triplicities (the Star Signs defined by their associated Element) and the Quadriplicities (the Star Signs defined by their quality).

	Cardinal	Fixed	Mutable
Fire	Mc	Venus, Mars	
Water	Asc	South Node, Neptune	Jupiter, Saturn
Air			Moon
Earth		North Node	Sun, Mercury, Pluto Uranus

Aspects

Next the Aspects must be examined. The first thing that needs to be done is to see if any of the planets are in orb of one another. This is done by counting the amount of degrees for any particular Aspect from a planet.

For your convenience we have prepared a table below giving the Aspect definitions:

Aspect Definitions

♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒
+/- 7° of 0°= a Conjunction	+/- 1° of 30°= a Semi- Sextile	+/- 5° of 60°= a Sextile	+/- 7° of 90°= a Square	+/- 7°of 120°= a Trine	+/- 5° of 150°= an Inconjunct	+/- 7° of 180°= an Opposition

The easiest way to work these out is to start with the Sun and work forwards, looking for Aspects until 180° of the birth chart has been covered. Then work backwards the same amount until the whole chart has been done.

On Gerald's horoscope the Sun is 13° 57' in Virgo. First check if there are planets in conjunction, then move on 30 degrees and see if there are any that form a semi-sextile, next progress 60° from the Sun and check to see if any form a sextile, then move on to 90° and so on. The process is actually simpler and

O													
	D												
♂		♀											
			♀										
				♂									
	Δ	Δ	Λ		⌋								
	Δ	Δ	Λ		♂	ℏ							
♂					♂		⊗						
					Δ		*	Ψ					
♂							♂	*	♀				
			∇		Δ	Δ				A ^c			
	*		□	Δ	*	*				M ^c			
Δ							Δ	♂	Δ			Ω	
*							*	♂	*				Ⓢ

We are now finally ready to interpret Gerald's natal chart. Approaches vary as to what will be looked at but generally at least the following features are included:

Gerald will have strong Cancerian qualities that give him a nurturing, domestic and emotional bent, which must be added to the practical, analytical and exacting qualities of his Virgo nature.

2. Ascendant Planetary Ruler

The Moon rules Cancer which is found on Gerald's chart in Gemini in the 12th House. This means that Gerald is quickly adaptable and will have a strong inclination towards helping others.

3. Sun Position

The Sun is in Virgo in the Second House so the typical Virgoan traits of practicality and efficiency will especially manifest in areas of finance, use of resources and the direction of talents.

4. Moon Position

Moon in Gemini (see above).

5. Angular Planets (Planets within an 8° orb of a conjunction with the Asc, Desc, MC and IC)

The Moon being just 1° in Gemini is within orb of the Ascendant. This will help to make Gerald a responsive character as well as a creature of habit.

6. Number of Planets in Fire/Air Signs and number of Planets in Water/Earth Signs

Fire/Air: 3

Water/Earth: 7

Most of Gerald's planets are in Virgo, which will serve to enhance particular qualities of that Star Sign. Uranus will give him freedom and originality of thought, Pluto may add some critical life changes around matters of the intellect, and Mercury will emphasise analytical capabilities. Saturn and Jupiter in the mutable Sign of Pisces emphasise a self sacrificial and compassionate nature. Neptune in Scorpio gives a passionately religious or mystical side to his character that will run deep.

Venus and Mars in Leo mean that Gerald will have a real combination of feminine and masculine energies. Venus will give him creativity and Mars will ensure the ambition and drive to succeed in whatever pursuits are chosen.

7. The Planets in their Houses

It will be remembered from the first lesson that Signs, planets and Houses are combined to construct an interpretative meaning. It should also be borne in mind that the natural Sign of any House also needs to be added into the mix no matter what Sign a planet is located in.

We will not do a full interpretation here but just give a couple of examples.

Venus in Leo, First House

As we have seen above Venus in Leo gives Gerald real creative ability (as well as a warm heart). This combination takes place in the First House ruled by Aries, which means that he will take the lead with creative endeavours, maintaining control over them and taking an independent stance.

Mercury in Virgo, Second House

Mercury in Virgo gives Gerald powers of communication (Mercury) that will be employed analytically and critically (Virgo); he will be quick thinking (Mutable Sign quality). This takes place in the Second House, ruled by Taurus, which happily adds stability to the Mercury/Virgo combination, meaning that his mental processes will be employed methodically and solidly.

It also needs to be remembered that a planet functions differently depending on whether the House it is in is Angular (Cardinal), Succedent (Fixed) or Cadent (Mutable). For example, an individual with Mercury in Virgo in a Mutable House will be analytical and communicative but will have a tendency to have a wandering mind. The same combination in a Cadent House will provide a person with real clarity of focus and even inspiration, whilst in a Succedent House reliability and solidity of thought will be the key note.

8. Main Aspect Patterns

The main Aspect patterns are interpreted in much the same way as the planets, Signs and Houses using the keywords learnt last lesson. It should be remembered that generally Trines are harmonious whilst Squares are usually challenging, Sextiles indicate compatibility, and so on.

Space does not permit a full breakdown but if we look at the conjunctions formed with the Sun in Gerald's chart this will give a good indication of how interpretation can be begun:

Sun/Mercury conjunction

This combination gives Gerald powerful mental ability and good powers of self-expression if supported by other factors.

Sun/Uranus conjunction

This conjunction means that he will likely have independent behaviour patterns that are different from the rest of any group he is associated with. It may also give him an eventful and unorthodox life.

Sun/Pluto conjunction

Gerald will have a powerful urge to periodically renew himself.

Concluding Comments to this Section

Enough has perhaps been said to give some basic interpretative leads. However, to really become good at Astrology takes a lot of practice at analysing horoscopes and giving readings.

There is also much more to be learnt. I have only just touched on the subject. An obvious field for further exploration would be to learn to progress a natal chart to different times throughout an individual's life. Now that you can set up a birth chart and have learnt to calculate the positions of the Planets accurately, you are in a good place to continue your studies should you so wish.

Research Project

The first thing to do this month is to set up and interpret your own natal chart as shown in the lesson. This can be done using the blank chart contained in Appendix One and the form for the calculations provided in Appendix Two. At first the mathematics involved may seem a little difficult, but if you use the form you will find things much easier. Please remember that calculations of hours, minutes and seconds are in base 60.

When you have done this successfully you may wish to create charts for your friends and family. This will give you some important practice at your new found skill as well as being of great interest to others.

It is also a good idea to take the opportunity to explore Astrology more widely. This may take the form of fleshing out knowledge of the planets, Star Signs and Houses; it might be looking at how to progress a birth chart; or it could be that you make a start on examining other areas of Astrology, such as Planetary Spirits.

Exercises

Further Construction of Talismans using Planetary Squares and Sigils

Last month we looked briefly at Planetary Spirits, Intelligences and Archangels. This chapter we will take a more detailed look at Planetary Squares and sigils and you will then be able to use them more precisely in the construction of talismans.

Planetary or magical squares are known as *Qameoth* (singular *Qamea*), a word that derives from a Hebrew word meaning “talisman”. Each Planet has an associated number. For Saturn it is 15, for Jupiter 34, for Mars 65, for the Sun 111, for Venus 175, for Mercury 260 and for the Moon 369.

These numbers are worked out using an individual planet's corresponding Sephira from the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Saturn corresponds to Binah, which is number 3 on the Tree; Jupiter corresponds to Chesed, which is number 4; Mars to Geburah, which is number 5; the Sun to Tiphareth, which is number 6; Venus to Netzach, which is number 7; Mercury to the Sephira Hod, which is number 8; and the Moon to Yesod, which is number 9.

There is then a formula for working out the mystical number of the planet, which may be expressed as:

$$\frac{N^3 + N}{2}$$

where the number of the planet's corresponding Sephira is “N”.

So, if we take the Sun as an example the formula is worked out as follows:

$$\frac{6^3 + 6}{2}$$

is equal to:

$$\frac{6 \times 6 \times 6 + 6}{2}$$

equals:

$$\frac{216 + 6}{2}$$

equals:

$$\frac{222}{2}$$

equals:

$$111$$

These numbers are incorporated into *Qameoth* so that in any one row, horizontal or vertical, the numbers add up to the same amount [2]. Below you will find the Planetary Squares for the Seven Magical Planets.

Square of Saturn

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Square of Jupiter

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

Square of Mars

11	24	7	20	3
4	12	25	8	16
17	5	13	21	9
10	18	1	14	22
23	6	19	2	15

Square of the Sun

6	32	3	34	35	1
7	11	27	28	8	30
19	14	16	15	23	24
18	20	22	21	17	13
25	29	10	9	26	12
36	5	33	4	2	31

Square of Venus

22	47	16	41	10	35	4
5	23	48	17	42	11	29
30	6	24	49	18	36	12
13	31	7	25	43	19	37
38	14	32	1	26	44	20
21	39	8	33	2	27	45
46	15	40	9	34	3	28

Square of Mercury

8	58	59	5	4	62	63	1
49	15	14	52	53	11	10	56
41	23	22	44	45	19	18	48
32	34	35	29	28	38	39	25
40	26	27	37	36	30	31	33
17	47	46	20	21	43	42	24
9	55	54	12	13	51	50	16
64	2	3	61	60	6	7	57

Square of the Moon

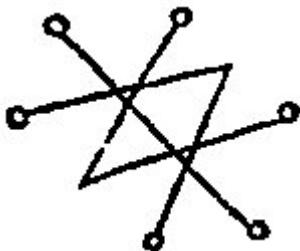
37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	74	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

Sigils

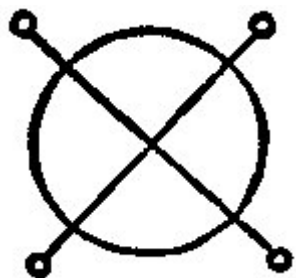
Planetary sigils are magical symbols that are believed to contain the essence of the planetary forces. Those given in Agrippa’s *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* [3] are constructed so that their lines touch each small square or number in a planet’s Square.

The sigils as found in Agrippa's work are given below:

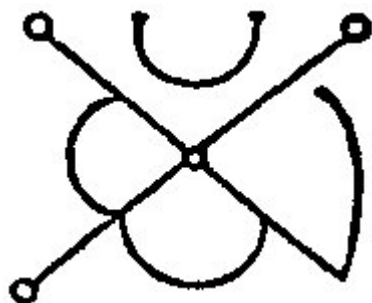
Saturn



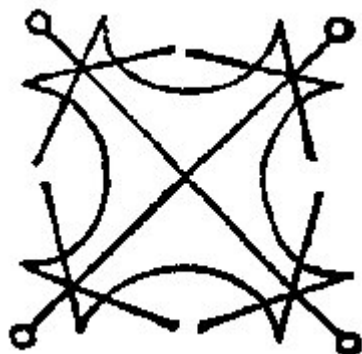
Jupiter



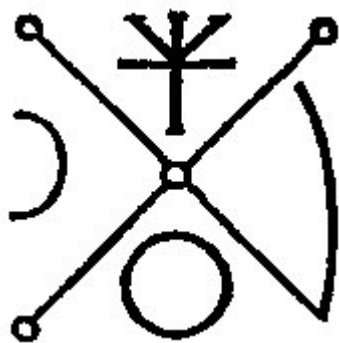
Mars



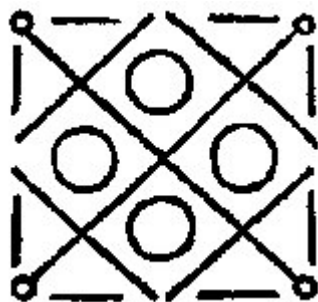
Sun



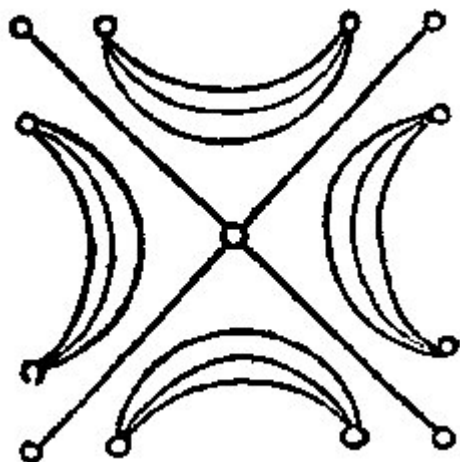
Venus



Mercury



Moon



You now know enough to construct your own sigils based on the Planetary Squares. Your name (or Witch name) can be converted into one by turning the constituent letters into numbers and then constructing a sigil by plotting these onto a Planetary Square that is in tune with a desired result.

This can be done using the table below:

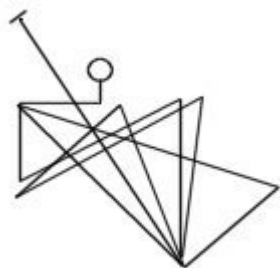
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

So for example, the name Pino Longchild becomes:

7956 365738934

If constructing a talisman, say to help aid increase of happiness, this could then be plotted onto the Square of Jupiter:

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13



Notice the sigil is started with a circle and ends with a line.

Symbols such as these are talismans in their own right but they can also be incorporated with other glyphs.

End Blessing

It is excellent progress that you have now completed the eighth lesson of the *Advanced Course*. You are now in a great position to continue your studies of Astrology should you so wish as you have now secured the basics. If you decide to go no further you should feel proud of the fact that your knowledge of the subject will be of real use to yourself and to others as you can use a natal chart to help identify strengths and weaknesses of character that can then be worked on for a beneficial effect.

May your understanding of Astrology allow you to see the Divine pattern in all things, may it open your eyes to the influence of the heavens on our lives below.

Love and Light go with you,

Blessed Be

And see you next lesson.

Notes

[1] Some list the planets at midnight.

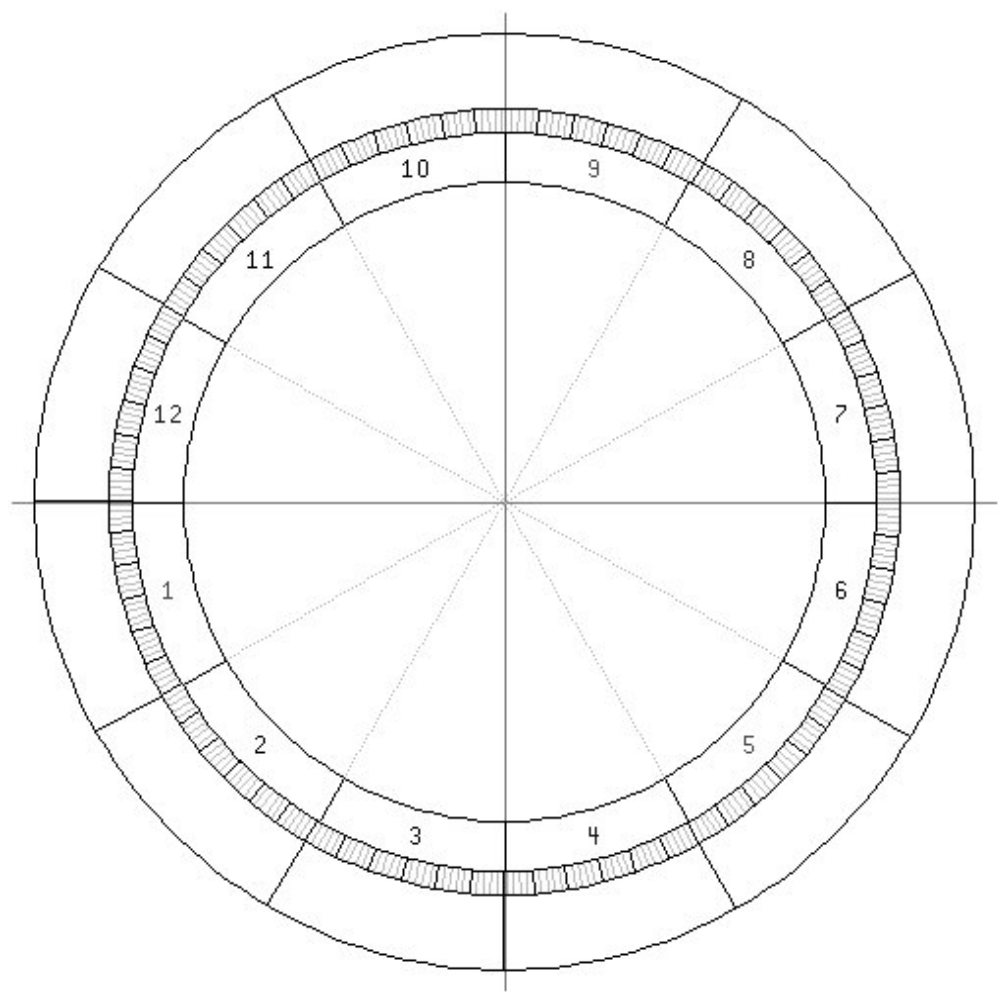
[2] This is done in a specific way using a number known as the Arcane Compliment (AC). Although the calculations to find the AC are relatively easy the rules for placing the numbers onto a Square are complex and would take a whole lesson to explain. Those that want to know more should consult Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero, *Self Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition*, Llewellyn, pp. 387-389, although even they do not go into the full method for working out the Squares beyond Jupiter.

[3] Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Donald Tyson, Ed., *Three Book of Occult Philosophy*, Llewellyn, 2004, pp. 321-7.

Appendices

All appendices to this chapter are copyright free and you may photocopy them should you wish.

Appendix One: Blank Chart



Appendix Two: Form to work out the planets' position at birth

1. GMT Interval

Birth Time _____

Birth Longitude _____

Time Equivalent _____ (+ if W – if E)

GMT Interval _____

2. Find 24 hour motion of the planets in degrees, minutes and seconds (remember when calculating that you are working in base 60)

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Noon GMT birth date					
Noon Time Day before GMT birth date					
Motion in 24 Hours					

3. Log of the GMT interval. Use proportional log table at back of Ephemeris

4. Log of each of the planets' motion. Remember to round seconds up or down before finding log

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Motion					
Log					

5. Log of motion combined with log of GMT birth interval

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Log of Motion					
Log of GMT birth interval					
Combined Total					

6. Convert combine logs to degrees and minutes

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Combined motion/birth interval log					
Degree and minute equivalent of motion					

7. Work out the positions of the planets on the birth date. +/- the degree and minute equivalent of motion from planet's position at noon of birth date. Remember calculations are in base 60.

If born at an AM time the figure for the motion is subtracted, if born at a PM time the figure for the motion is added.

	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Moon	Mars
Noon at birth date					
Motion					
Position at local birth time					

Note: if a planet's motion is retrograde, subtract the figures for PM births and add for AM.

8. Position of other planets at noon on birth date

	Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
Noon at birthdate					

Appendix Three: Planets, Triplicities and Quadriplicities

	Angular(Cardinal)	Succedent (Fixed)	Cadent (Mutable)
Fire			
Water			
Air			
Earth			

Appendix Four: Aspect Table

[illegible]

Chapter Nine: Psychic Powers

Psychic Powers

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will learn about how to develop your senses and psychic powers.

Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Psychic Powers

Commonly, psychic powers are understood to be a form of “extra sensory perception” (ESP), the idea that our minds are capable of experience beyond seeing, hearing, touching, taste and smelling. It is also generally understood as the ability to influence the world around us through non-physical means.

Before looking at ESP though let us look at the senses themselves. A Witch aims to use all means at his or her disposal for religious or magical purposes. Before developing any of the higher psychic skills it is an excellent idea to work on developing things that can be immediately understood and worked with.

It is often surprising how people will rush headlong into developing psychic skills without having given a second thought to their sense functions. How many of us really see the world around us? How many of us savour the different things that we touch? How many of us pick up the faintest scents or can hear minute sounds? [1] The fact is that many of us live our lives without really experiencing the world around us on any deep level at all. How can one then expect to develop and function adequately on a psychic level without having mastered the basic senses that they have?

A great illustration of this lack of awareness has been demonstrated by Scott Anthony, director of Innosight consulting company. He presented a short video film to a group of around three hundred guests at a conference and asked them to count the amount of times a basketball was passed between three people wearing white, who were playing in between three people wearing black. Sound easy? For the vast majority of people it was, although their counts varied between twelve and sixteen passes. The guests were then asked to raise their hands if they'd noticed anything unusual about the short film. Only about twelve put their hands up. The remaining two hundred and eighty eight guests had all completely missed the man in the gorilla suit who walked across the screen twice [2].

Now, of course this kind of phenomena can be put down to the fact that our brains are designed to be selective. If they weren't we couldn't possibly function as

human beings as we'd quickly become swamped by sensory information. Most of the time our minds do this automatically, subconsciously we decide what is significant and our brain then ignores or plays down the rest. The problem with this is that we allow this to happen without a second thought. As a result we do not have full control over our minds and without full, or near full control, it can be very difficult to effectively practice magic or carry out many of Wicca's religious practices.

Earlier on, in *Wicca Revealed*, you were given an exercise to choose a colour and then on your way to work, or out on a regular walk, you had to look for it. If you chose pink, for example, I bet you were amazed at how many things were in that shade that you weren't even aware existed.

When we have command of our senses we are in a position to truly begin to filter out all the things that we don't need and focus on those things that we do.

More Advanced Sensory Exercises

In this section of the lesson I have created a number of exercises that are designed to enhance your five physical senses and give you greater control over sensory information that enters your mind.

Developing Sight and Recall

This exercise works well in a noisy and busy environment although it requires that you have the ability to place yourself in a calm meditative state under such conditions. Having practiced meditation for some time now, you should be able to do this. Locations that work well for this exercise are shopping centres, pubs, train stations etc. Make sure though that you are able to sit somewhere where you won't be disturbed for a period of five minutes or so.

Put yourself in a meditative and calm state by using a favourite breathing exercise and familiar visualisation. This may take a few attempts on different occasions if you have only meditated in a quiet room at home. Next concentrate on fully using your sight to take in your surroundings in a 180 degree sweep, really make an effort to notice everything; the ceiling, the lighting, the walls, the people, the colours, the objects that are moving and those that are stationary. Do this for around one minute and then put yourself back in a quiet introspective meditative state, using a favourite visualisation again. The exercise is over until you get back home.

Once at home place yourself in a meditative state, use the same visualisation as you used last when you were outside. Then replay the entire minute that you surveyed your surroundings. With a bit of practice you should find that you can actually view the scene in your mind's eye as if it were a film. Sounds will be hazy,

as will smells and sensations, but you should have a bright full colour movie that is entirely non-selective.

If you repeat this exercise in a variety of locations for a few weeks or so you will find that you are able at will to take in all visual information of a surrounding. This can have some very useful applications that can help you in all kinds of situations from being able to find an item in a store, to being a reliable witness to a crime scene.

Hearing

Most people are familiar with the amazing hearing abilities blind people have; being deprived of the sense of sight means that they must develop an incredibly fine ear to compensate. Just as our brain screens out many things we could see, so our minds also choose to be selective as to what we hear. Not so for a blind person, to make sense of the world they rely on picking up on the things that the rest of us miss. They can tell different individuals by the sound of their walk, they can hear conversations across the room that the rest of us can't, they know how people are feeling from the sound of their breathing.

An easy way to train your mind to develop its powers of listening is to spend some time depriving yourself of sight. If you have a magical partner try going for a walk in a park with a headscarf over your eyes with your partner close to hand to stop you from stepping in unpleasant things or walking into trees [3]. This is best done regularly over the space of a few weeks (it can be a good idea to choose a different location each time, that way your brain will be forced to deal with an unfamiliar situation and you will also avoid becoming known as the nutter who walks blindfold round the local park each Sunday). At first you will likely find the experience humorous, then uncomfortable and a nuisance, or even slightly unnerving. This is to be expected. The only way round the situation is to use your other senses and primarily you will find you have to rely on hearing. It is important to wear a blind fold for at least half an hour each session and to stick it out over three or four attempts over the course of a month.

After a while you will find that your brain adapts and that you can really use your hearing to get yourself around. When you reach this point you will also begin to find that you are much more aware of sound in the course of your daily life.

Taste and Touch

Think you know what things taste or feel like? Think again. A simple experiment with a partner will show you just how underdeveloped these senses are in the average human. Whilst your partner prepares 5 types of food (you mustn't know which) put on a blindfold and place cotton wool up your nose (to prevent you smelling the food). Then take a mouthful of each food and attempt to guess what it is. Parsnip is often confused for potato, pork for chicken and apples for pears. A

similar experiment is to get your partner to prepare five unfamiliar things to touch and say what they are made from (not what they are), this is very hard to get correct as, for example, glass, metal, china and plastic can all feel similar if they are solid.

A way to develop taste is to chew your food more before swallowing, which is good for digestion anyway. Spend some time eating less overly prepared food; try different varieties of vegetables or fruits than normal and you will soon develop a more refined palette. Many people consider the process of chewing to be a merely mechanical process, where bits of food are made small enough to pass through the oesophagus and to the stomach. The truth is that the mouth is where the chemical process of digestion begins. Saliva can begin the breakdown of starches into sugars, and if foods remain in the mouth for more than a few moments, one will actually be able to taste the change taking place. Patience is an important component in being able to sense the world around you [4].

As for touch, try some touch rich activities like gardening, wood work, or dress making. A visit to a fabric shop for example can be an amazing feast for your hands and other areas of your skin.

Smell

Finally, let us consider smell. Many who live in cities or have spent time as smokers or in smoke filled environments may well have quite a poor sense of smell. Quite literally, such living or working conditions will have damaged the olfactory receptors in the nose. The best way to improve your sense of smell is to take yourself somewhere where the air is cleaner for a week or so and give your nose some olfactory treats. A holiday visiting gardens of stately homes, a wine tasting weekend or a retreat to woodlands or a forest are all great ideas.

Relating the Senses to Wicca and Witchcraft

OK, so you have spent some time developing your sensate abilities. How though does this relate to Wicca? Let us consider magical practice first of all. As you have learnt in several places throughout our Wicca courses the ability to visualise what you want to achieve is very important. The greater the clarity of vision the greater the end result. When the term “visualise” is used it means more than just being able to “see” what you want to create. What will it sound like, what will it feel like, taste like and smell like? The more you are able to imagine what it is you want, in as much sensate detail as possible, the more likely you are to achieve it. Why? In part people are generally motivated by feeling good and whether you feel good is determined in part by your experience of life, which is brought to you through your senses. If you show yourself, in as much sensate detail as possible, something that you will find pleasurable, you become more motivated to achieve that end result [5].

And what are the benefits of developing your senses on spiritual experience? Well, Wicca is a natural Earth based religion and Witches strive to feel in tune with the planet. One of the main ways this can be done is by taking the time to appreciate the Goddess's beauty through the senses. Heightened senses equal a heightened sense of the Deity that surrounds us.

So it can be seen that although sensate abilities are not “psychic”, developing them will have a profound effect on your life. You will be much more in tune with life in general and more able to shape reality to your own ideas of what it should be like. You will be much more effective in your magical practice and find your experience of closeness to divinity is heightened. These sound like grand claims but hopefully these teachings, and others on the nature of reality and magic, have shown you just how much the resources you have within yourself can be used to do some incredible things.

Experience Beyond the Physical Senses

Every culture throughout history has its tales of “extra sensory perception”. In this section of the lesson we will briefly [6] explore some of the more common types and then consider how they may be developed.

Post-cognition or Retro-cognition

Post-cognition is the ability to be able to tell when something has happened despite having had no physical indication of its occurrence. Perhaps one of the most common forms of this type of ESP is the experience of “feeling” that something has happened to a person or group of people close to an individual. “Feelings” seems a less than satisfactory term, however, although individuals are often totally convinced that something has happened, they are often at a loss to explain how they know of it. They have neither seen nor heard it in their mind, yet somehow they just “know”.

Lots of people seem to know when a relative has died or fallen seriously ill when they have not been expecting it. In my own family my brother knew when my Great Aunt had died. Others know when a baby has been born or a marriage has been announced. Some people even sense less significant events have happened. For example, my wife often senses that I am on my way home, despite irregular hours being kept on my part, and puts the kettle on in preparation. Neither are such feelings confined to humans, our family once had a dog that would wag his tail excitedly a good ten minutes before my father got home (the point at which he would be getting off the bus), no matter at what time –he just seemed to know when his master had arrived back in town. Also many dogs howl

when a loved one dies, even though they weren't at the hospital when their owner passed.

There are literally countless, well-documented reports of these kinds of events. Some theories seek to explain them with the idea that family members, friends and even pets are all part of a "soul group" and thus connected at a profound level [7]. Others take a more sceptical viewpoint and advance the idea that when we find out something of shattering or surprising importance about those close to us we cushion its blow by constructing in our minds the idea that we already knew. I prefer to base my ideas on psychology. As I have pointed out in a number of places throughout my courses, many psychologists, following the lead given by CG Jung, believe that at a fundamental level we are all interconnected in the mysterious realm of the collective unconscious. If this is the case then it may indeed provide a scientific basis for Post-cognition.

If we accept that the collective unconscious exists it can be seen that everything we do has the power to affect it to a greater or lesser extent for it is the repository of all human experience. This would seem to adequately explain visions or feelings of events that have happened, as it seems entirely probable that those who are sensitive to the non-physical planes of existence might be able to pick up on disturbances within the web of collective unconsciousness, and that the more sensitive the person the more they will feel.

Precognition

Precognition [8] is the ability to receive information about an event or series of events at some point in the future without having any forewarning or being able to deduce a happening through physical means. So, for example, it can include sensing events as diverse as an airplane crash to knowing that your child will be selected for the football team next year even though they have expressed no interest in the game as yet. Precognition can take various forms; it may involve direct visions, dreams or vague feelings. It can be an essential part of the art of divination and even clairvoyance (see below).

Explaining precognition is more difficult than post-cognition. The reason for this is that reference cannot be made to the collective unconscious. An event hasn't yet happened to disturb it. We are therefore left to look at notions of time. Basically these boil down to ways of looking at its nature and the concept of "future". Commonly we consider our lives as moving from a known past into an unknown future, that is, the line of time points only one way. There are, however, other ways of seeing things. Some feel that the future is already fixed and definite (a conclusion of some Einsteinian physicists) and that we live, in effect, in an eternal present; on the other hand some physicists argue that although broadly speaking we live along a linear time-line, retro-causal events are possible under extreme conditions [9] and posit the idea that time can flow backwards as well as forwards. Either viewpoint allows for the possibility of precognitive experience.

And especially with regard to the latter there is some recent scientific analysis to back up such claims [10].

Clairvoyance

Clairvoyance derives from 17th century French and means “clear-seeing”. The word suggests that an individual receives information that is primarily visual in nature of things that are unseen or hidden, although it can also be used to describe experiences of clairsentients and clairaudients. Perhaps most famously, clairvoyance came to the attention of the modern world in the form of “remote viewing” techniques developed by Russel Targ and Harold Puthoff at the Stanford Research Institute in the 1970s. Remote viewing, or clairvoyance under controlled conditions, was of great interest to the American government for its possible spying and defence value. The US reportedly spent over \$20 million over a period of twenty years only to abandon the research amid claims and counter claims of its scientific basis [11].

Regardless of this, there are many who believe that they have the ability to see feel or hear things that are impossible to sense by conventional means.

One of the most well known branches of clairvoyance is communication with entities from the other levels of existence. Many people report that they can somehow sense the presence of human or animal spirits and even spirit beings. If you have been practicing the exercises from the lesson on astral projection you may well have experienced such things yourself and been able to converse with members of your family who have crossed to the other side, as well as people who may have had no relationship to you on the physical plane. One of the great joys of having learnt to develop such skills is the confirmation that all of us are immortal and live on within the other planes of life.

Telepathy

Telepathy is the ability to communicate or share information between one mind and another through non-sensory means. There have been many experiments into telepathy over the last hundred or so years. None of them have been conclusive, although a number have provoked much debate. Of these the Zener [12] card experiments developed by JB Rhine [13] have perhaps been the most famous. There are 25 cards in a pack of Zener cards. Within these are 5 cards depicting the same circle, five with the same wavy line, five with the same equal armed cross, five with the same square and five with the same star. When using the cards to test for telepathy a person selects one of them and then attempts to mentally project the image to another person [14]. Almost as famous were the Ganzfeld experiments where one person would have their eyes covered (with ping pong balls and cotton wool) and their ears muffled whilst another person attempted to project an image into their mind from another room. Both

experiments have had their conclusions, that psychic abilities were observed, criticised by others within the scientific community [15].

Nonetheless, many believe that in their lives they have had a telepathic experience.

Psychokinesis

Psychokinesis is often defined as the influence of mind upon matter, the power to mentally move or distort an object. To this we would also add that the field includes the ability to influence events through the application of intention.

There are many famous accounts of the first kind of psychokinesis of which Uri Geller's spoon bending feats are perhaps the best well known, followed by the table moving abilities of Nina Kulagina. Apparently impossible occurrences such as these remain highly controversial despite having been examined by scientists [16].

However one views this, there is an increasing body of evidence that the mind's intentions influence the outcome of events. Dean Radin has concluded that intention can influence the scores of dice being thrown in a way that is statistically significant and there are other examples conducted by many scientists of the mind influencing mechanical operations and even cellular activity in plants, fungi and animals [17].

With this our brief survey of the better known aspects of ESP is at an end. Let us now go on and consider how they may be developed

Developing ESP Skills

One of the questions levelled against those who learn to develop psychic skills is "why bother?" To this can be answered that Witches are often seekers who wish to explore their potential to its fullness, investigate thoroughly the nature of what it means to be human and learn about their surroundings in as deep a way as possible. More than this though, psychic experience strengthens Witches' ties with the non-physical world and allows them to develop their spirituality and closeness to Deity. This latter benefit is often completely ignored by those who would criticise a belief in ESP. The debunkers and sceptics usually concentrate on whether or not the skills exist. This is justified on the grounds of exposing fakes and frauds who exploit others. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this (indeed such people deserve to be exposed), often the baby is thrown out with the bath water. Few critics look at the genuine spiritual comfort people obtain from quietly pursuing the development of psychic skills.

Keeping a Record

I have said this before and i will say it again; one of the most important things you can do to develop yourself is keep a record of experiences. This is particularly valuable in furthering skills of post-cognition, precognition and clairvoyance, although it should be used for any ESP ability. This is because first and foremost it will demonstrate to you that these kinds of experiences are actually relatively common. Now, of course, it isn't generally every day of the week that you know that your Great Aunt is going to die or that you have used your mind to move an object. But many of you will have every day psychic experiences such as knowing that your partner will be home early, or will receive an image in your mind on the way home that they want you to pick up something for the meal tonight. In fact, so common are these "feelings" that we often don't pay any attention to them at all. Not always are they accurate, and this perhaps explains why many people don't act on these kind of hunches and return home saying "I had a feeling that you wanted me to get potatoes but I thought I was being silly, so I didn't." This is a shame, so ingrained in our culture is the idea of not trusting what our minds tell us that we ignore it. By keeping a record of such experiences you will signal to your brain that you really do have these experiences and that you are now beginning to take them seriously. It is important to carefully record the times when your feelings about things are right and when they are wrong. Note the time of day, the energy level you had at the time of the experience, the context of the experience and so on. It may be that to start with most of your feelings about something are wrong, but over time you will notice such things more and more and be prepared to trust in what you are feeling. This has a snowball effect; the frequency of incidences will build slowly at first but after a few months many people find the flood of psychic information unstoppable. If you don't believe this is possible then all I can say is try it for six months and see.

A Variety of Useful Exercises

Alongside careful note-keeping there are a number of specific exercises that can be recommended for developing psychic skills.

Clairvoyance

If you don't have a pack of Zener cards then you can quite easily make your own. A template for them can be downloaded from <http://www.tarot.org.il/Library/Zenner.pdf>. Make sure though that you print them or draw them on card that is thick enough so that no trace of the image shows through. It is also a good idea to leave their backs completely blank (or identical); this way there will be no clue as to which card is which.

With a partner, or by yourself, shuffle the cards and turn them face down. See if you can then "see" which card is on top. Repeat this until you are through the

deck and record your results. How many times were you right? How many times were you wrong? Try this exercise about once a week until you begin to notice a ten percent improvement in your score and then stop [18].

Those of you who have been investigating astral travel may well have had success in contacting a number of spiritual entities and family members. You may even have had contact with spirits from other's families. Some people who have felt they have had such experiences go on to become mediums and seek to bring comfort to people who feel that they have lost loved ones. Before you think about setting yourself up to do this though, I would ask you to think very carefully. Many people who claim the powers of mediumship are, in fact, what are known as "cold-readers". Cold-readers typically ask leading questions, which an individual answers, and these are then represented to the individual as though the spirit, that the medium claims to be in contact with, has said them. Not all people who do this are fraudsters, often mediums have self-deluded themselves into thinking that they have an ability to converse with the departed. Others though, including some very famous people, make a fortune out of cynically exploiting vulnerable people. I would suggest, therefore, that you make a study of cold-reading and that you have not allowed yourself to fall into this trap [19].

Telepathy

Zener cards are also very useful for developing telepathic skills as they provide a simple image to concentrate on that can then be sent to another person. It is best to carry out this exercise with a partner after you have both placed yourself in a relaxed and meditative state. Soft lighting and a warm room are recommended. One partner should sit whilst the other lies down comfortably. It can be a good idea for this person to wear a light blindfold, ear muffers shouldn't be necessary as you will no doubt have already chosen a quiet meditation location. The person sitting should concentrate calmly on forming a mental picture of the Zener card in their mind, in much the same way as the way as for general meditative images. Once this has been securely formed the image should then be consciously projected into the other person's mind. Do not strain, just calmly let the image go across to them.

The person lying down should do their best to create a calm empty space in their mind. Some people prefer to think of blank whiteness, others of a uniform darkness. Either way the important thing is that it should be blank. As well as this they should also aim to create a sensation of openness within their minds. Do not concentrate on receiving; all you need to do is create a perfectly blank open space.

With a few attempts the first person should be able to find they can send an image and the person laying down will likely find they can receive it. You will discover though that you are not right at every attempt. Do not give up! As with all things write up your experiences, accurately record what worked and what didn't and then try again a few days later. Over a period of time you will find it is possible to improve your success rate.

Daft as it may seem, you can also try sending a telepathic message to someone close to you when they are on their way home to you from somewhere. This kind of situation often works well for the sending and receiving of messages. Why this is so is open to conjecture, but it may be that because both parties are anticipating meeting up that their minds are a little more receptive to each other than usual. Ask the person to bring something home that you need. Concentrate calmly on the item for a few seconds and consciously project this to their mind. As soon as you have done this make a record of what you have done. When the person returns home record whether they got the message and whether they acted on it. This method often has a surprising amount of success, especially when the bonds between the people are close.

Psychokinesis

At some level everyone can perform psychokinesis, although few, if any, can genuinely move furniture around a room by paranormal means [20]. Although many claim to have such skills, lots of Witches will tell you that such assertions are likely to be fraudulent [21]. However, using your mind to influence the course of events is widely practiced by those in the occult field and there is a body of scientific evidence that seems to support its validity. For example, as Dean Radin and others have observed, humans can influence statistical outcomes in a variety of circumstances [22]. Witches, of course, take this a stage further believing that through the use of magic, events and outcomes can be directly influenced. However, enough has been said about the practice of magic already in this work, and there is no need to give further exercises here.

Research Project

The Challenge from the Sceptics

One of the most challenging things any Witch can do with regard to the subject of ESP is go away and read the literature that is critical of the whole notion of psychic phenomena. I did not suggest that you go away and do this on the *Wicca Revealed Course* for deliberate reasons; it can be a genuinely shattering experience that will cause you to question and reassess many of your beliefs. It may even cause some of you to turn your back on your faith. Why then do I suggest that you do it? There are a number of reasons. The most obvious is that you will eventually emerge stronger from the experience. This is the case whether or not it shatters your Wiccan world view or your belief in ESP. If you come to reject much of what you have learnt on this course you will have done this having thoroughly weighed the pros and cons for yourself, similarly if you choose to continue to embrace things it will give you the means with which to adequately face the critics and, perhaps more importantly, will have strengthened your beliefs.

One of the most challenging critics I can think of is the stage magician James Randi. Randi has famously offered a \$1 million dollar prize for anyone who can demonstrate paranormal powers under test conditions agreed to by both parties. He has written numerous sceptical publications and presented a variety of TV shows that expose many occult claims. His web site can be visited at <http://www.randi.org/>.

An excellent critical organisation can be found in the form of the *Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal* <http://www.csicop.org/si/> who publish a bi-monthly magazine *The Skeptical Enquirer: The Magazine of Science and Reason*. Also worth a look is <http://www.skeptic.org.uk/> and <http://www.skeptic.com/index.html> both of which publish recommended sceptical magazines and a number of sources on their sites.

When reading their materials I would suggest you do this with as open a mind as possible. Some of the things they write will infuriate you as you will have had experiences that suggest they are wrong in their assertions, other points they make you will agree with. By keeping an open mind you will be receptive to the truth, which is after all what you desire to know.

End Blessing

Congratulations are in order as you are now three quarters of the way through the entire *Advanced Wicca Course*.

With the heightened physical sensory awareness and improved psychic skills that you develop as a result of this lesson you will notice how much richer and fuller life will become.

You will feel a whole new layer of connectivity to the World and its different levels of existence. I hope that this expanded journey brings you a deeper level of joy and happiness in all that you do.

In Love and Light,

See you next lesson

Notes

[1] It was Aristotle who first defined the five senses. Experts today generally see that humans have nine. The additions are *Thermoception* (sense of heat), *Nociception* (perception of pain) *Equilibrioception* (the sense of balance) and *Proprioception* (the sense of knowing where all our body parts are without reference to other senses). Some see humans have many more senses than this, depending on how "sense" is defined.

[2] Scott Anthony's demonstration was designed primarily to show how people are bad at perceiving change in an environment but it is also a great way to support the notion that our senses regularly miss many amazing things. Independent research indicates that whenever this experiment is performed only around 10% of people see the gorilla.

[3] For legal reasons I have to state that this should not be attempted without someone to look over out for you. Apologies for stating the obvious but I am obliged to make the statement to cover myself.

[4] I am indebted to Deirdre Hebert for much of the content of this paragraph.

[5] This is very similar to the concept of Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP.

[6] It is recommended that the student spend some time researching each area further. The subject is vast and for reasons of space I am doing little more than just scratching the surface.

[7] This idea is put forward in a number of sources one of the more modern is in James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy*, Bantam, 1994.

[8] There can be a fine line between precognition and post-cognition. For example, many seek to describe the sensation of knowing who it is before you pick up a ringing phone as precognition. However, what that person is sensing is someone who has already dialled a phone, in our view this is therefore post-cognition.

[9] For example, under extremes of gravity or speed.

[10] This view has been built upon by the scientist Dean Radin who has conducted experiments that seem to show that humans can experience time-reversed effects in their minds. See <http://www.boundaryinstitute.org/articles/presentiment99.pdf>

[11] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remote_viewing

[12] Zener cards were named after Karl Zener, a colleague of the card's inventor, JB Rhine, who selected the five designs that would go on the cards.

[13] JB Rhine (1895-1980) was a pioneer of parapsychology and developed many methods and concepts to do with the subject.

[14] The cards can also be used to test for clairvoyant skills where a person attempts to see what the next card will be in a pile or series of piles.

[15] Perhaps most notably by Ray Hyman who had carried out much work on behalf of the US government looking into the validity of government funded psychic studies.

[16] For example Nina Kulagina was repeatedly examined by Soviet scientists in the 1970s. Many regard the experimentation process used as flawed.

[17] See the article by William G Braud from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology Palo Alto, California USA, at <http://integral-inquiry.com/docs/649/intentions.pdf>

[18] It is important not to overdo this exercise. There is evidence to show that over time the mind becomes bored with the cards and the improvements may tail off.

[19] Some excellent sources that explain cold-reading techniques are Ray Hyman's article at <http://www.skeptics.com.au/articles/coldread.htm>, Dennis Dutton's discussion of the Barnum Effect at http://www.denisdutton.com/cold_reading.htm and the Straight Dope's comments about TV psychics at <http://www.straightdope.com/mailbag/mcoldreading.html>.

[20] As this paragraph shows, I have quite a narrow interpretation of psychokinesis at the School. Students who wish to have a broader take on things might like to consult Michael Schmicker, *Best Evidence: An Investigative Reporter's Three-Year Quest to Uncover the Best Scientific Evidence for ESP, Psychokinesis, Mental Healing, Ghosts and Poltergeists*, Iuniverse Inc, 2001.

[21] There are of course others who will swear blind that they have seen demonstrations of such things. To be honest though, despite having been in the occult field for over 25 years, I have never come across someone who could demonstrate such powers. However, many claim they have the skills and some can create almost convincing illusions.

[22] It is only fair to note that not everyone is entirely happy with Radin's work, see for example the article at <http://www.skepticreport.com/psychics/radinbook.htm>. Radin's experiments have garnered interest amongst other scientists and much media coverage, but his methods and conclusions have not had widespread support from the scientific community. At the end of the day you must decide what to believe.

Chapter Ten: Crystal Craft

Crystal Craft

Welcome to the Class!

In this chapter you will learn about how crystals are used by Witches.

Continuing on, there is a research project for you to complete.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Please Note: Those who suspect they need treatment for any medical condition should first consult with a qualified medical practitioner. Any healing methods written of within this lesson should be seen as complimentary to any medical advice that is given. None of the methods should be seen as primary cures for illness or disease.

In general it is recommended that crystals that are used for healing and most magical work are not of the smoothed, polished or cut variety. This is because crystals that are in an original state are the ones that best retain their properties.

Introduction

The term crystal comes from the Greek *krystallos* meaning clear ice. Their defining feature is that they consist of tightly packed atoms and molecules that extend in a regular repeating pattern in all three dimensions of space. Crystals have been used for centuries in healing and magical practice and it is therefore no surprise that they are often regularly employed by Witches in the course of their work.

First and perhaps foremost, crystals delight us. As creatures we are drawn to their beautiful colours, their regular shapes, their hardness and weight, their shine and their glow. All cultures through out time have prized their innate beauty, often beyond the value of life itself. They have a beguiling and extremely strong fascination for nearly all of us. Perhaps because this is so obvious it barely seems to merit comment at all, but why should they be so attractive?

Colour

Part of the reason lies in their colour. As I have pointed out in a few places in my books and courses, colour is an important influence on the mind and, through the mind, on the body [1]. There is good evidence to show that colour affects our moods and behaviour and there is an increasing awareness how colours are linked to various physical effects [2]. The information below gives a generally accepted standard, although it is possible to find sources that disagree.

Red

Red can be a great tonic and has a well known stimulating effect. It is generally seen as increasing energy and causing the release of adrenaline into the body. As a result, the muscular system and senses are roused. It also stimulates the circulation.

It can cause anger to swell and anxiety to increase and is therefore not indicated for those who are prone to emotional problems or those with physical conditions who need calm. It should not be used around those who have inflammations.

Pink

Calm shades of pink (as opposed to the shocking variety) have a generally positive effect on most people. It aids the renewal of the mind and the body and can be useful for instilling tranquillity. Peaceful thoughts that it instils lead to a wider consideration for others.

A soft enveloping pink can be used in prisons to keep inmates calm [3].

Orange

Orange is an invigorating colour without the often overly powerful stimulating effects of red. It lifts the spirit and gives a boost to those who are feeling lethargic. It can increase feelings of sociability.

It is a good colour for digestive complaints as well as general aches, pains and cramps.

Yellow

Yellow, when it tends to a golden sunlight colour is one of the most universally uplifting and healing colours. It promotes a general feeling of well-being calm and happiness. It promotes clear thinking and speed of the intellect. It is also useful for lifting those suffering from nervous exhaustion.

It may also be helpful for those who require greater physical mobility.

Green

Green, in healthy vibrant vegetable shades of the colour, is the colour of restorative health and well being.

It has a gentle calming effect and as a result promotes a clear mind and alleviates tension. It can ease headaches.

It is a good colour for issues to do with the heart (along with subtle shades of rose pink) promoting relaxation and banishing anxiety.

It is excellent for promoting gradual recovery.

Turquoise, Blue-green or Aqua

A light turquoise, the colour of shallow ocean over sand, is another great calming colour that can be used to aid meditation.

Blue

Light, sky blue is a great antidote for things that have inflamed the mind and the body and creates a sense of pleasant coolness. It also helps stimulate the body's immune system. It promotes a sense that immediate healing is present (why do you think ambulance lights are blue and not red or yellow?).

It helps free the throat and is indicated for those who find speaking up difficult or who suffer from ailments in this region of the body.

Used in meditation before bed time this colour aids relaxed sleep.

Indigo

Indigo is good for aiding the idea that one is safe and can come to no harm. Because of this it can be good for insomnia and a variety of nervous complaints (it should not be used for depression however as its darkness will obviously tend to exacerbate the condition).

It may help to promote the correct functioning of the veins and ease varicosity. Some say it may quicken the healing of bruises.

Violet

Violet calms, pacifies and protects. It can therefore be indicated for those with nervousness, who are emotionally disturbed or who feel unsafe.

It can also reportedly help stave off hunger pains.

Because these colours have certain effects on the human body and mind, it follows that crystals that are of these hues will have something of the effects

outlined above. Thus, for instance, Amazonite, which is often a turquoise coloured crystal, will have calming effects, whilst violet Amethyst is often considered to be protecting.

Piezoelectric Properties and Effects on the Body

There is more to crystals than just the fact that their colours have certain effects. Those who are expert in crystal therapy often cite their piezoelectric properties (that is, when a crystal is compressed it can emit a voltage) [4]. Further, the constituent atoms and molecules in crystals are tightly packed in a regular, ordered, repeating pattern. These are seen to vibrate at certain frequencies and it is believed that these act on the body's electromagnetic field causing a range of outcomes depending on the crystal used, the part of the body it is used on, and the condition that is being treated [5]. Proponents of this point of view often link the use of crystals with Chakras.

Chakras

Chakras are important centres of energy within the body. It is believed that maintaining their balance plays an important part in spiritual, mental and physical well being. A number of meditative exercises within the Magicka School courses are designed to bring them into harmony. Not always though is their equilibrium achieved through meditation alone, and one of the quickest non-meditative methods is to use crystals to bring these areas into vibratory harmony. This is most frequently done by placing the stones on various parts of the body.

Which crystals are used, and where they are placed, depends on the practitioner's understanding of the problem, and often relies on a theory of compliments and opposites.

For example, a patient with coronary disease may require an emerald applied to the Anahata or heart chakra. Another individual who finds oral self expression difficult may have the throat or Vishuddha chakra boosted with aquamarine.

Scientifically based evidence that such methods have any positive effect on patients is hard to come by. Nonetheless, many who have had such treatments with crystals often speak enthusiastically about the experience and feel that it has benefited them [6].

Crystals and their Properties

The following section lists a number of commonly used crystals and their generally accepted main healing properties. It should be noted though that not all authorities agree about these.

Amethyst Violet, purple and lavender varieties	A general all-purpose healing stone, which may be particularly beneficial to the skeletal structure. Protective and can be effectively used in purification and cleansing rituals. Widely employed in meditative work as it helps create a peaceful environment and allows the individual to centre more easily. Used in conjunction with the chakras Sahasrara and Ajna, it is said to help receptiveness to psychic phenomena and the Higher Self. Amethyst is also a well-known crystal for healing addictions. Indeed, a number of recovery centres are known by this name.
Aquamarine Light blue to green varieties	Energises a person's mental state and at the same time brings balance to the emotions. Like Amethyst helps a connection to the Higher Self. Promotes self-awareness and comprehension. Used in conjunction with the Vishuddha or throat chakra can promote self expression and confidence at public speaking. Helps communication in general.
Aventurine Green variety	All-purpose healing crystal. Promotes harmony between masculine and feminine energies. As a result, can help to set free the creative spirit and make self-expression easier. Creates emotional balance. With energies in balance an individual will be less prone to fear, panic and anxiety, perhaps because of this it is said to be excellent for the cardio-respiratory system.
Bloodstone	A phrase applicable to this stone is "Be here now". It keeps a person grounded in reality. As its name suggests it is reputedly helpful for blood disorders and purification. May also help to promote a healthy heart and do good for the circulation.

Blue Lace Agate	A calming and soothing stone that will quicken mental processes so that the individual feels more inspired. Promotes clear thinking. Particularly recommended for use with the throat chakra. Will also reputedly help to relieve pain in many regions of the body and remove energy blocks and build-ups.
Calcite Calcite will be found in a variety of different hues	Green Prevents infections, helps to ensure energy flows smoothly through the chakras, may also increase energy. Good for helping to promote creative thoughts and clearness of thought. Blue Promotes a sense of inner peace and tranquillity that may also effect those surrounding the user in a positive way.
Carnelian	Helps to dispel grief and get rid of lack of motivation, promotes physical vitality. Can be used to treat ailments of the kidneys (especially stones) and the spine. May help to protect against allergic reactions. In conjunction with the Swadhisthana chakra it can help fertility problems. Eases anxiety about death.
Citrine	Promotes clarity and focus, ideal for spell work as it strengthens will power and resolve. Reduces anxiety, fear and relieves depression. Uplifting. Promotes the circulation of blood and energy. Helps to keep the chakras properly aligned, although it corresponds to the Manipura chakra the kidneys and the liver.
Diamond	The stone of love <i>par excellence</i> and a potent symbol of fidelity and truth. Helps keep a clear mind and a connection to the Higher Self. Helps to keep the immune system healthy when placed on the <i>solar plexus</i>. Can aid peaceful sleep. May also help to purify.

Emerald	Strongly linked with the Anahata or heart chakra. As such will help to promote the health of that organ and general well being and vitality. Reportedly useful for circulatory problems and eyesight. Brings love and peace. Lifts the mood, dispels anxiety and depression. Keeps the mind calm and clear. Used to detoxify and guard against poison. The greatest healing stone.
Garnet	Good for menstrual cramps. Fine general promoter of a healthy circulatory system. Will help to lift sorrow and ease grief. Increases energy and its circulation. Acts as a catalyst on other crystals. Strengthens commitment Promotes a feeling that one is nurtured.
Haematite	Encourages calm and grounding and a feeling of centeredness.
Iolite	Augments creativity and imagination.
Jasper	Helps to promote auric healing and balance. Red Protects -good for safe astral travel. Heals the body's tissues. Can be used to keep the kidneys pure and promote the health of the stomach, liver and bladder. Green Aids sleep. May generate feelings of compassion. Brown Useful for grounding unwanted energy.

Jet	Protecting, balancing and stabilizing. Lifts depression and helps to relieve feelings of grief.
Lapis Lazuli	Stimulates a greater awareness of all things mystical, magical and mysterious. Promotes a great degree of inner peace and consciousness of the Higher Self. Useful in the construction of amulets and talismans where protection is needed. Indicated for use with the Third Eye and throat chakra as it helps to expand consciousness.
Moonstone	Good for easing emotional anxieties. Will promote a better digestion May be good for ensuring a correct balance of fluids within the body. Helps with menstrual difficulties as well as a wide range of fertility and childbirth issues from conception to birth. Sometimes referred to as the “birthing stone”.
Moss Agate	As well as improving self image and keeping emotions on an even keel, this stone also reportedly helps to ensure the health of the lungs by keeping the passage ways clear.
Obsidian	Obsidian is a great stone for use in concentrated meditative and trance work. When used as a tool in scrying it will help too induce visions of hidden things. Promotes intuition and foresight.
Onyx	A general stone of physical, mental and spiritual protection that also promotes the harmony between these three states. May help with disease of bone marrow.
Opal	Helps to create feelings of happiness and joy. Balances physical and mental energies. Enhances intuition and foresight.
Quartz	A crystal that amplifies other fields of energy within its vicinity and will therefore boost the effects of other crystals use for a treatment. The crystal of choice for skryers.

Rose Quartz	Is a gently calming stone that quietly nurtures and protects, whilst at the same time maintaining a balance of energies within the human body and mind. Promotes receptivity to creative influences.
Ruby	Ruby is perhaps best known as helping to heal and protect the heart both physically and emotionally. It also boosts confidence and gives a nudge to stamina and courage. A stone of leadership.
Sapphire	Keeps the mind balanced and as a result helps to ensure inner peace. Promotes receptivity to the Higher Self and connection to the Divine.
Tiger's Eye	When used in conjunction with the solar plexus this stone promotes energy flow. Perhaps because of this it creates an air of general optimism and a sense of personal empowerment. A good general protector, it also aids in keeping an individual grounded. Helps to provide a sense of security and abundance. Promotes will power and self assertion. Indicated for respiratory conditions as well as those of the eyes and the spine.
Topaz	Topaz promotes the clearing of blockages within the body and helps to increase clarity of mind. It protects against anxiety, mood swings and aids restful sleep. It can help to create a positive outlook on life. Good for blood circulation, the reduction of pain. Can be used on conditions associated with the endocrine glands, liver and kidneys. Can help to relieve symptoms associated with arthritis and rheumatism.

A Holistic Approach

It will be noted that the above table defines the properties of the crystals in terms that relate to the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the individual.

This is to be expected as crystal therapy very much takes a holistic approach. Unlike much of “Western” medical practice, physical symptoms are not treated in isolation. This is because of an understanding that what manifests itself in the body as an illness or disease may, in fact, be caused or exacerbated by something that is going on within an individual’s mental or spiritual state.

Many of the crystals above are chiefly promoters of peace and tranquillity, where they seem at first glance to have few explicitly curative properties. However, it is firmly believed that a deeply calm state that can be achieved by the application of a good balance of crystals will provide the best possible circumstances for the body to regenerate. Although such a philosophy is widely accepted within the circles of “Western” medicine, where it is generally recognised that an anxiety free mind is necessary to healing, what is often lacking is a methodology to achieve such an end. Crystal therapy is one answer to this.

It is believed though that crystals provide more than just the ability to create a peaceful mind. Many crystal therapy practitioners feel that the stones can effect cures for defined ailments where “Western” medicine has failed [7].

Chakras and Using Crystals to Heal

Before embarking on using crystals as a healing tool it is a good idea to make sure that one has knowledge of the energy centres within the body. Perhaps the easiest to understand, and the one that is best supported in the literature, is that of the chakras. Not everyone who is reading this will have read *Wicca Revealed* and for this reason I have re-presented the information on chakras here.

Chakras

The word chakra derives from Hindu culture and is usually explained as an energy centre that exists within the human body. During your studies you will come across a variety of different theories and general information about chakras and here are given only the most commonly held ideas and definitions.

In general it is considered that there are seven chakras [8]. These are thought of as being aligned in a column from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Their role is to draw in universal life force energy or prana to maintain spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health of the body through balance.

The chakras are associated with physiological functions, aspects of consciousness and colours. They are generally understood as giving life-force to the physical body and are places where physical, emotional and mental energies interact.

The seven chakras are:

1. Sahasrara

Also known as the crown chakra. It is the wheel of consciousness and the chakra that controls all others. It is usually symbolised by a thousand petalled lotus and represented by the colour ultra-violet.

2. Ajna

This area is also often referred to as the third eye. It is the chakra of light, awareness and time and is shown by a lotus with two petals. It is represented by the colour indigo or violet.

3. Vishuddha

Or the throat chakra is linked to growth and communication and is symbolised by a sixteen petalled lotus and the colour blue.

4. Anahata

Also known as the heart chakra this area is related to love, balance and a sense of well-being. The chakra is shown by a lotus with twelve petals and the colour of leaf green.

5. Manipura

This chakra is situated at the *solar plexus* and is related to energy and digestion it is symbolised by a lotus with ten petals and the colour yellow.

6. Swadhisthana

Also known as the sacral chakra, this energy centre is located in the groin, and linked with emotion, sexuality and creativity. It is shown by a by a lotus with six petals and the colour orange.

7. Muladhara

This is the base or root chakra and is linked to survival, the need for security and to reach one's potential security. The Muladhara chakra is shown by a lotus with four petals and the colour red.

Some texts on chakras refer to them as being a type of energy that emanates from the spiritual and gradually becomes physical or concrete, finding rest eventually in the Muladhara chakra. Comparisons can therefore be drawn between this and other emanative systems; in magical theory the link most often made is with the Kabbalah [9].

Many who work with chakras believe that the energy of creation lies sleeping in the base of the spine in the form of Kundalini energy (often visualised as a coiled snake). This energy can be awoken and caused to rise back up the chakras and achieve union with the divine in the Sahasrara chakra.

A Healing Approach

Before attempting to heal anyone it is essential to get a good idea of just what their affliction is. For this reason, many who use crystals to heal will provide an initial consultation session with a prospective patient. Typically these last for between 45 minutes to an hour and consist of asking the patient a series of questions. Quite what is asked will vary depending on the individual practitioner, but in the Appendix I provide (copyright free) outline questionnaires for those who may wish to use them. It should always be explained to a patient that the questionnaire ranges over their whole life, as often things that happened long ago impact on present health. It needs to be made clear that a patient is under no obligation to answer any of the questions and should not be put under pressure to do so.

After this initial consultation it can often be a good idea for a healer to spend a while looking at the evidence they have collected. Often this deep questioning approach may unearth a number of seemingly unconnected issues. For example, a person may recall a happy enough childhood at home but been teased mercilessly in school. They may have gone on to have a good career and happy marriage but be constantly afflicted by throat infections that mean they have to take time off work. These set of circumstances may indicate that the early childhood experience of being teased has left a blockage of self expression that is manifesting itself in the throat and affecting their employment.

Of course, these things are open to interpretation and it may be that the diagnosis is wrong. Over time though, as a healer gets to know his or her patient, they reach a better understanding of the condition and can then arrive at a treatment.

There will be many unhappy with this style of healing practice; some people want to arrive at a healers, be given a quick cure and sent home. This is often what happens when one visits a general practitioner of Western medicine. A patient has a very quick 5 minute consultation, is prescribed a drug and off they go. Often this works, but Western medicine can be less than excellent at spotting underlying causes and dealing with the patient as a whole. There are many who return and return again for a variety of diseases, illnesses and infections and are on a treadmill of drugs that offer only temporary respite.

Healing with Crystals

Having carefully considered a patient as a whole the healing process using crystals can be begun.

It is important to make sure that the individual is made as comfortable as possible. Typically this will involve them laying on a bed or mattress on the floor. The room should be comfortably warm. Ideally they should wear loose clothing made from natural materials (when healing someone you already have an intimate relationship with the patient may be naked) and covered in a light blanket.

In the background gentle music can be played. Soft lighting can be a good idea, although thought should be given to the fact that some may feel uncomfortable being treated in a semi-light surrounding, particularly during initial consultations.

Lead the patient in a regular breathing pattern and into a relaxing guided meditation. Many of the meditations you are familiar with from the Magicka courses that are designed to relax the mind and body can be ideal.

Depending on the illness being treated, crystals can then be placed either on or around the body at appropriate chakra points. A whole book could be written on possible combinations of crystals and space does not permit a discussion here. However, using the tables of colours and crystal properties above useful combinations can be found.

Once the crystals are placed the patient can then be left for a period of time to allow them to take effect. How long will depend on the illness and the amount of time is judged to be needed, typically though the time frame can be between 10 to 20 minutes.

The crystals can then be removed and a final relaxing meditation performed. The patient can then be sent home asking them to keep a note of any improvements that they notice before returning for therapy.

Excellent record keeping is essential. Once the patient has gone home it must be written down which crystals have been used and where, as well as the amount of time they were left on the patient. When they return for more treatment, a careful note must be made of any effects that they experienced since they were last in care. Depending on what they report, the combination and positioning of the crystals can be altered.

Some Final Thoughts on Healing using Crystals

This lesson is not designed to be anything like a course in healing. All I have done is given you a few basics and a number of useful suggestions. It is little more than an overview. Anyone interested in pursuing crystal therapy seriously should get in contact with organisations that provide comprehensive courses.

However, I have given enough detail to begin to practice healing work on friends and family. Remember though, if you suspect that an individual needs medical care they should always consult a qualified medical practitioner. Crystal therapy is strictly complimentary to any advice they may give, and should not be used as a first resort.

For those who may wish to pursue crystal healing as a profession I have the following thoughts:

I always teach that with healing skills comes a responsibility to those in a Witch's vicinity. After all, they are of little value if they are not used for the benefit of others. However, the culture of looking after one's fellow human beings, without the prospect of a substantial pay back, is alien to many. Most Witches

stand in marked contrast to this kind of world view and actively seek to use what they know to help society at large for a reasonable fee -the true Witch will have a fair price and business plan. Too often many in the occult field will charge exorbitant amounts for services, pricing out, or taking advantage of, the poorer members of a community. This is no more in evidence than in the field of healing. Many who have been to psychic fares will no doubt have seen the £50.00 magnetic healing bracelets, the £25.00 ten minute aura scan and the £60.00 healing crystals.

Crystals and Magical Practice

For completeness's sake I will now turn my attention to the use of crystals in magical practice. Just as these stones have a long history of use in medicine they also have an ancient pedigree in the art of magic. They are widely used to enhance just about any type of magical practice from spells to rituals.

As outlined above, crystals have certain specific properties that act holistically. Because of this they are extremely useful to any Witch or magician as magic is worked through the human mind and body.

As you have learnt in previous lessons, successful magic is all about raising appropriate levels of energy, visualisation and the direction of will. Crystals are capable of enhancing all these areas.

Quite how crystals help increase energy is open to debate. But many Witches will use a variety of crystals positioned or worn strategically to help amplify and modify energy being raised. Crystals can also help to focus the release of energy and this helps to explain why many wands have tips fashioned from gem stones. The table below gives a general indication of some of the magical properties of a small variety of crystals.

Amethyst	Violet, purple and lavender varieties Protective and can be effectively used in purification and cleansing rituals. Helps the individual to centre.
Aquamarine	Light blue to green varieties. General promoter of energy. Good for aiding connection to spirit.
Aventurine	Green variety. Balances yin and yang energies.
Bloodstone	Useful for grounding.

Blue Lace Agate	Helps promote the flow of energy.
Citrine	Helps to create a clear attentive mind. Supports the will.
Diamond	Promotes a connection to the divine.
Emerald	Energiser
Haematite	Aids tranquillity, grounding and centeredness.
Jet	A protective, balancing stone.
Lapis Lazuli	Consciousness of the divine.
Obsidian	Meditative and trance work. Skrying.
Quartz	Boosts fields of energy that are nearby or being worked with. Often found on the end of wands as it also allows energy to pass through with little risk of blocking. Skrying.
Rose Quartz	Receptivity
Ruby	Helps promote leadership.
Tiger's Eye	Boosts the will and helps a Witch assert themselves.

Crystals are also widely used to enhance meditative visualisations, where it is believed that different crystals can be used to help create varying effects. As with the use of incense there are no hard and set rules over use. A stone that helps to create a certain effect in one person will not in another. However, the crystal property and colour property tables above can be consulted for general guidelines on the effects that a crystal is likely to produce. Although at the end of the day, it is very much a question of experimentation.

There are also a variety of Kabbalistic, zodiacal, planetary and elemental correspondences that can be taken into account when using crystals. This information is given directly below.

Kabbalistic Gem Stone Correspondences

Kether	Diamond
Chockmah	Star ruby, turquoise
Binah	Star sapphire, pearl
Chesed	Amethyst, sapphire
Geburah	Ruby

Tiphareth	Topaz, yellow diamond
Netzach	Emerald
Hod	Opal
Yesod	Quartz
Malkuth	Rock salt [10]

Elemental Correspondences

Fire	Ruby
Water	Moonstone, aquamarine
Air	Topaz
Earth	Onyx, moss agate, rock salt

Zodiacal Correspondences [11]

Aries	Diamond, garnet
Taurus	Emerald, lapis lazuli
Gemini	Pearl, agate
Cancer	Ruby, moonstone
Leo	Golden topaz, sardonyx
Virgo	Sapphire, peridot
Libra	Opal, emerald
Scorpio	Topaz, obsidian
Sagittarius	Turquoise
Capricorn	Garnet, jet
Aquarius	Amethyst, aquamarine
Pisces	Bloodstone, pearl

Magical Planetary Correspondences

Saturn	Onyx, jet
Jupiter	Amethyst, lapis lazuli
Mars	Ruby, garnet
Sol	Topaz
Venus	Emerald, turquoise
Mercury	Opal
Luna	Moonstone, pearl, quartz

A Witch will use all these associations and then mix and match, depending on the effects desired. For example, a spell to create happiness and protection might involve the use of a stone of Jupiter/Chesed such as amethyst and a stone of Sol/Tiphareth such as topaz.

Research Project

This month's project is to begin to collect a variety of crystals that can be used in healing and magical work and begin to practice using them in some of the ways outlined in the lesson.

This needn't be super expensive to do. You don't need to purchase a diamond, a ruby or an emerald. There are many relatively cheaper semi-precious stones that are more than adequate alternatives.

When buying the stones do not be afraid to pick them up and hold them. It is important that you choose stones that "feel" right in your hands. They will after all become valuable tools.

Once you have assembled a variety you are then in a position to begin to use them. I would suggest at first that you experiment with their use during meditations and begin to get a feel for how a particular stone affects you. From there begin to incorporate their use in circle casting, simple spell work and the healing of minor ailments. Over time you will begin to know your crystals intimately and will start to trust them and have a real feel for their use.

Remember to keep an accurate record of how your stones work for you.

Once you feel thoroughly familiar with them they can then be used on others as healing implements.

End Blessing

You now have two healing methods at your disposal from this course, herbs and crystals, both of which also have wide applications in a range of magical practices.

The really great thing about both is that they can be of enormous benefit to those around you and have the possibility to help you make a difference to the lives of your family, friends and even your community at large.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you success in your endeavours to use Wicca for the benefit of others. May it bring you joy to know that you can make a difference and may it bring great benefit to those around you.

In Love and Light,

See you next lesson.

Notes

[1] There are few scientific studies into this effect and it is therefore hard to counter sceptics with peer reviewed material from well known journals. Much of the evidence is anecdotal, for example, those with headaches would generally rather not have a bright red wall to look at but would prefer rather more calming shades.

[2] See, for example, Faber Birren, *Color Psychology and Color Therapy: A Factual Study of the Influence of Color on Human Life*, Kessinger, 2006

[3] See the article at

http://www.channel4.com/health/microsites/C/comp_medicine/colour.html

My editor, Deidre Hebert, informs me that the specific color was Baker-Miller pink. An interesting article is here: http://www.colormatters.com/body_pink.htm

[4] There are many theories propounded about why crystals may have positive healing properties. These range from the frankly silly (aliens planted crystals on Earth) to the interesting (crystals affect us psychologically and therefore physically).

[5] It should be noted that mainstream science strongly refutes that crystals generate any appreciable electromagnetic effect that is capable of causing any difference to any human condition.

[6] If all that is achieved through the use of crystals is a positive outlook then it is arguable that this is worthwhile within itself. Often the fact a patient feels they are on the road to recovery is enough to help aid the healing process. Even sceptics of such treatments often find this hard to deny. Where many sceptics do have an issue with crystal healing, though, is the often exorbitant sums that practitioners of crystal therapy ask for something that may be of no greater benefit than the placebo effect.

[7] The evidence for this is admittedly largely anecdotal.

[8] Some sources talk of five and others of eight, some even of more Chakras, especially above the crown.

[9] Those that want to find out more could start by reading the Ciceros' chapter "Yoga, Chakras, and the Wisdom of the East" in Israel Regardie, edited and annotated by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero, *The Middle Pillar, The Balance Between Mind and Magic*, Llewellyn, 2003, pp.159-174. Also see Figure 1 in the same publication for a diagram that combines the Chakras and the Tree of Life.

[10] Although obviously not a gemstone, rock salt is nonetheless a useful crystal.

[11] There is little general agreement about stones linked to zodiac signs and other correspondences will be found.

Appendices

Appendix One: Preliminary Questionnaire

To be used to get a general overview of a patient. Please make sure the patient understands that they don't have to answer a question should they feel it is too intimate.

General

Name

Sex

Date of Birth

Living circumstances

Single/partner

With children/without children

Type of accommodation

Location of accommodation? Elicit if they live near a busy road, electric power plants, pylons, factories etc. or if they live in the country, near water etc

Does the client feel their housing meets their needs?

Childhood

Invite the patient to comment on their childhood. Was it happy? Were there any disturbances? Were there any dissatisfactions (the word is deliberately vague so as not to lead a patient)?

Education

Invite the patient to tell you what education they received

Present

What kind of job do they have? Include homemakers as a job.

How do they regard their work?

What are they satisfied with?

What are they dissatisfied with?

Do they have something else they would rather be doing?

What would their ideal week be like?

Social Life

How would they describe their social life?

Sex Life

How would they describe their sex life?

What works well?

What doesn't work well?

General Indicators

What is their favourite colour?

Favourite season?

Favourite time of day?

What is their sleep pattern like?

Diet and Exercise

Do they exercise?

How often?

Do they feel the exercise they do benefits them? And how?

Do they drink caffeine (tea, coffee, Coke, Red Bull)?

Do they eat sugar?

How often do they eat fruit and vegetables?

How often do they eat red meat, white meat and fish?

Sleep

Generally when do they go to bed and wake up?

How do they sleep?

Where do they sleep?

Which direction do they sleep in (i.e. compass direction)?

Asking wide ranging questions such as these allows the healer to build up a fairly comprehensive background picture about the patient. And will identify many areas of their life that may be influencing their health negatively.

Having asked these preliminary questions the healer can then go on to inquire about the patient's health.

Appendix Two: Patient's Health Questionnaire

This section of analysis is divided into two; the previous medical history of the patient and their current concerns.

Previous Medical History

Childhood, up to 13

Ask the patient to list any diseases, illnesses or injuries they sustained. Ask them to be as specific as possible.

How satisfied were they with the way they were dealt with?

Do they have any feelings that these illnesses affected them later in life? If so, how?

Adolescence, up to 18

Now do the same for adolescence.

Ask the patient to list any diseases, illnesses or injuries they sustained. Ask them to be as specific as possible.

How satisfied were they with the way they were dealt with?

Do they have any feelings that these illnesses affected them later in life? If so, how?

Adulthood

Now do the same for adulthood

Ask the patient to list any diseases, illnesses or injuries they sustained. Ask them to be as specific as possible.

How satisfied were they with the way they were dealt with?

Do they have any feelings that these illnesses affected them later in life? If so, how?

Current Health Issue/s

What symptoms does the patient have?

How are the symptoms affecting them?

What part of the body seems to be most affected?

When did they first notice the symptoms?

How did they initially manifest?

How would they see themselves if completely cured? What would they be able to do that they cannot currently?

Chapter Eleven:

Sex and the Great Rite

Sex and the Great Rite

Welcome to the Class!

In the first this chapter you will learn about the Wiccan Great Rite and attitudes towards sex.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Introduction

Now that you are very nearly at the end of the *Advanced Course* I will spend this lesson tying up a number of things that we have yet to describe in detail elsewhere.

In the first section of the lesson we will be looking at Wiccan attitudes towards sex and a ritual known as the Great Rite.

Wiccan Attitudes Towards Sex

Wiccans take a reverential and spiritual attitude towards sex. Because they regard all things to be the embodiment of the Goddess and God, they see that their bodies are holy. Unlike many other religions, flesh is not seen as being something that is inherently sinful and neither is taking pleasure in sex seen as wrong. Because of this Wicca is refreshingly free from attitudes of embarrassment or debates over whether sex is ~~an~~ evil. Witches are unabashed sexual creatures and proud of it. However, this does not mean that Wiccans are in any way lacking sexual morality; far from it in fact.

Wiccans believe that the bodies of others should be respected. This means that they eschew much of the fashion oriented beauty scene, where both women and men have so-called perfect role models force fed to them by advertising in a bid to make them buy products and conform to an ideal. They take an aversion to the fact that flesh is used to sell products. Here in Italy you wouldn't believe what pictures of scantily clad women are used to market; everything from bathroom sealant (seriously) to pasta and this in a country that gave birth to Roman Catholicism – and this is the norm in much of the Western world.

Conversely Wiccans celebrate the fact that we are all different and that we are each perfect in our own way. There is no standard of sexual beauty within Wicca.

This is typified through the use of religious imagery where figurines and pictures of all manner of body types are used to depict gods and goddesses. There is no one ideal female figure, no one perfect image of maleness to live up to.

Many Witches decide to celebrate their bodies and this is no more in evidence during ritual work where communing with things regarded as holy is often seen as being best done skyclad or naked.

Given that Wiccans have a deep respect for the human form it follows that they have a sound sense of probity when it comes to sex. As in all things they are bound by Witchcraft's central tenet of " 'An it harm none". Wiccans do not exploit other humans, do not pressure people into things they feel uncomfortable with and do not engage in orgies or in mutilation of body parts. Most frequently Wiccans have stable relationships and engage in monogamous, loving sexual practices.

More than this though, Wiccans view sex as being profoundly spiritual and magical. As discussed elsewhere within this course, sex can be used to work magic and is a way of reaching a state of divine oblivion for it raises energy and at the point of orgasm allows the mind to be set free for an instant. As was taught in *Wicca Revealed*, the most important thing that can be done when working magic is to reach the point of nothingness, the point at which the idea of self no longer exists. For it is here that a direct connection to the Divine can be established. This is the place from which all things arise.

For Wiccans, sex has its greatest expression in the Great Rite.

The Great Rite

Broadly defined, the Great Rite is ritualised sexual intercourse used to raise power and often to work magic.

To those who disapprove of Wicca this whole topic is the confirmation of their worst fears and is often used to drag the religion through the mud. They knew it all along; Witches are orgiastic and depraved Satanists who regularly practice group sex to work their evil spells. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth, although if you read some fundamentalist Christian polemic literature you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

In fact, the Great Rite is practiced only between a couple and has two forms; an actual version and a symbolic one. It is often a key part of Third Degree initiation and is widely incorporated into the Greater Sabbats. It is only ever practiced between consenting adult partners and the actual version is most typically performed by those already in a stable relationship and nearly always in private [1].

It reveres the polarity between male and female and is intended to give expression to the physical, mental, spiritual and astral bond between man and woman, God and Goddess.

Despite its prominence today within many coven traditions, it is mentioned surprisingly few times within the prototype of all Books of Shadows; the Gardnerian manuscripts. On examining the generally agreed standard text [2] it is

mentioned a handful of times under the main Sabbats, the Eight Fold Way, or ways to work magic, and beneath the heading of Power. No ritual is given.

It was not until The Farrars wrote *Eight Sabbats for Witches* [3] that a published version of the Great Rite was placed in the public domain. Their version was designed for a full strength coven of around 13 members, to be honest though most covens are not of this size [4].

I give my own version below; as most covens are, in fact, quite small I take this into account in the ceremony. Unlike the Farrars' version I do not assume the participants are naked, to start with at least.

The Great Rite, Symbolic Version

It is assumed that the circle is already cast.

Before the Great Rite starts the altar should be prepared with a chalice of wine and the High Priest's athame,

The High Priestess and Priest should stand in the centre of the circle facing each other. The High Priestess has her back towards the altar in the East and the High Priest has his back to the West [5]. Any other coven members stand on the circle edge; if there are just a couple make sure that the North and South Quarters are covered. As far as possible make sure that the coven members alternate between man and woman.

The High Priest kneels down and gives the High Priestess the Five Fold Kiss. This was originally part of Drawing Down the Moon [6].

*"Blessed be thy feet, that have brought thee in these ways.
Blessed be thy knees, that shall kneel at the sacred altar.
Blessed be thy womb, without which we would not be.
Blessed be thy breasts, formed in beauty.
Blessed be thy lips, that shall utter the Sacred Names."*

As he pronounces the above he gives a kiss to each foot (starting on the right) and knee, the womb, both breasts and lips. On touching the womb the High Priestess spreads out her arms.

Following this, the High Priestess should lie down on her back and stretch out her arms and legs to make a pentagram. Ideally she should be positioned so that her vagina is at the centre of the circle [7]. The High Priest collects his athame from the altar and places this to the outside of the left foot of the High Priestess. Next, he picks up the chalice and places this by her right foot [8]. He then kneels down between her legs facing her.

The High Priest then says:

"We erect the Ancient Altar, at which in days past all worshipped, the Great Altar of all things. For in the old times a woman was the Altar. Thus was the altar made and so placed,

and the sacred place was the point within the centre of the circle, as we of old times have been taught, that the point within the centre is the origin of all things. Therefore should we adore it."

"Therefore, whom we adore, we also invoke. O circle of stars, whereof our Father is but the younger brother. Marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space, before whom time is ashamed, the mind bewildered and understanding dark, not unto thee may we attain unless thine image be of love.

"Therefore, by seed and root, and stem and bud and leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke thee, O, Queen of space, O dew of light, O continuous one of the Heavens. Let it be ever thus, that men speak not of Thee as one, but as none, and let them not speak of thee at all, since thou art continuous, for thou art the point within the circle, which we adore, the fount of life without which we would not be. And in this way truly are erected the Holy Twin Pillars Boaz and Joachim. In beauty and strength were they erected, to the wonder and glory of all humankind [9].

The High Priest picks up his athame. The High Priestess kneels and picks up the chalice.

The High Priest continues:

"Altar of Mysteries manifold, The Sacred Circle's central point, Thus do I sign thee as of old, with kisses of my lips anoint."

The High Priest kisses the High Priestess on the lips, and continues:

"Open for me the Secret Way, The pathway of intelligence, Between the Gates of Night and Day, beyond the bounds of time and sense. Behold the Mystery aright, The Five True Points of Fellowship" [10].

As the High Priestess holds out the cup, ~~of~~ the High Priest places the tip of his athame into the wine and both man and woman hold the hilt.

The High Priest says:

*"Here where Lance and Grail unite,
And feet, and knees, and breast, and lip" [11].*

The High Priest removes his athame. The High Priestess lifts the chalice to his lips and he drinks from it. He kisses the High Priestess on the lips, as he does so he hands his athame to the High Priestess, who places it on the floor. She takes hold of the chalice which he presents to her to drink from. She gives him a kiss.

Together they place their hands round the chalice and stand. The chalice is then presented to each coven member to drink from (starting with a woman). After each member has drunk they must kiss the High Priestess and Priest.

Cakes can then be consecrated as usual.

The Great Rite, Actual Version

The Actual version of the Great Rite is the same as the above up to the lines:

"And in this way truly are erected the Holy Twin Pillars Boaz and Joachim. In beauty and strength were they erected, to the wonder and glory of all humankind."

At this point, a female coven member takes her athame and opens a gateway within the circle. All coven members then leave the circle and room. The gate-opener closes the circle and is the last to leave.

The High Priestess kneels. The High Priest removes her robes and says:

*"Altar of mysteries manifold,
The sacred Circle's secret point
Thus do I sign thee as of old,
With kisses of my lips anoint."*

The High Priest kisses the High Priestess on the lips, and continues:

"Open for me the Secret Way, The pathway of intelligence, Between the Gates of Night and Day, beyond the bounds of time and sense. Behold the Mystery aright, The Five True Points of Fellowship."

They then make love. When they have finished, the High Priestess opens the circle and asks the rest of the coven to return. When they are all back in the circle she seals it.

The consecration of the wine follows:

The High Priestess and Priest kneel before the altar. He holds up the chalice of wine, whilst she holds her athame and lowers the point into the wine. The High Priest says:

"As the athame is to the male, so the cup is to the female; and conjoined, they bring blessedness."[12]

The High Priestess places her athame on the altar and kisses the High Priest as she takes the chalice and takes a drink of the wine. She kisses him once more and then takes it around the other coven members who each take a sip and give a kiss in return.

Cakes can then be consecrated as usual.

Some Further Points

As always, there is no reason why you cannot make up your own Great Rite ceremony and many covens have their own variants.

What though about single sex covens? What are they to do for a Great Rite?

This presents a variety of considerations that the courses at Magicka have tended not to cater for [13]. In a Gay, Lesbian or straight single sex coven how are the Divine Forces of male and female to be represented and played out? There are a variety of different avenues that could be taken.

The most extreme of these is to deny the opposite sex virtually altogether as, for example, some Dianic covens are wont to do (although not all). This is seen as

being a respectable take on the religion; after all, as long as it harms none, Witches can do as they please.

Another possibility is to choose one member of a coven to represent the opposite sex. Again, perfectly respectable, although it has the drawback that that person is not actually of that sex and the required genuine polarity will be absent.

A final option, which I would advocate above all others, would be to recognise that although two people of the same sex may be performing the Great Rite they nonetheless have Yin and Yang (masculine and feminine) traits within them and that these can be recognised and worked with throughout a ceremony.

Solitary Witches tend not to perform the Great Rite for obvious reasons; they have no partner with which to engage. However, as I have just written, all individuals have male and female aspects within themselves and can use these within ritual work. The solitary practitioner can employ sex to raise power or perform magic; auto-stimulation and release can have the same effects as a sexual act between two people. It is a way of raising energy, it stimulates the mind and body and, at the point of orgasm, can provide that all important space into which an intention can be cast.

End Blessing

Congratulations, you are now just one lesson away from having completed the entire *Wicca Advanced Course*. This is a considerable achievement as you now have the knowledge base and skills of most Second Degree Witches. In fact, dare I say it, if you have been following the research projects and exercises diligently and consistently, you have surpassed many Witches who claim Second Degree status. Life is not a competition though, and I mention the comparison merely because you should feel a sense of pride in your achievements and know that what you have learnt with Magicka is valid and will stand you in excellent stead for living a truly magical life.

I hope that you have enjoyed this course and have found it beneficial. If you wish to write to me at admin@magickaschool.com, I would be extremely interested to know in which ways it has altered your life for the better.

I wish you peace, love and harmony in all that you do for the rest of your life and hope that you will continue to develop your exploration of Wicca and Witchcraft.

In Love and Light,

See you next chapter

Notes

[1] There are a few covens in some traditions where this is not always the case. This is very rare and it should be pointed out that where this is the case everyone is clear about why it is so, it is consensual, performed between adults and safeguards are in place to stop abuse.

[2] Compiled by Aidan A. Kelly and available as a free download here: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/gbos/index.htm#contents>

[3] Janet and Stewart Farrar, *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, Phoenix Publishing Inc., U.S. 1988.

[4] Many students at Magicka will also be working with family. I have discussed elsewhere the issues surrounding including family members who are not adults in Wiccan ceremonies. Obviously, special thought needs to be given to this ceremony and I would advise that minors are not admitted to it.

[5] It will be remembered that Magicka places its altar in the East, the Farrars place it in the North.

[6] Those who are interested can look this up in the *Gardnerian Book of Shadows* here <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/gbos/gbos01.htm>. The reference is to the 1949 version.

[7] On page 49 of *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, the Farrars state "The Great Rite specifically declares that the body of the woman taking part is an altar, with her womb and generative organs as its sacred focus, and reveres it as such."

[8] In the Farrars' version the High Priest calls on a female coven member to hold the athame and a male to hold the chalice.

[9] This is almost verbatim from the Third Degree Initiation ceremony from the *Gardnerian Book of Shadows*, see <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/gbos/gbos05.htm>. As no authorship of it was ever claimed, it is widely believed to have copyright free status.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid

Chapter Twelve:

A Rite of Passage

A Rite of Passage

Welcome to the Class!

In this lesson you will make some final considerations about what it means to have the equivalent knowledge and skills of a Second Degree Witch. You will then be given some pointers about how to go about designing a suitable rite to mark this important stage in your development. And you will also be considering the issue of setting up a coven.

Continuing on, this there is a research project for you to complete.

Next you will find a reading list to help broaden your knowledge.

Finally, there is a blessing.

Introduction

First of all, I would like to offer you their heart-felt congratulations. You will have worked extremely hard to get to this point over a period of at least a whole year, and those of you who took the *Wicca Revealed Course* will have been studying and practicing for around twice that long. The road has been a long one and it should be acknowledged that for many this will have been very tough as most students are solitaires and will not have had the support of others in the “real world” to give advice and encouragement.

Now you have completed this course you have a comprehensive overview of what it means to be truly Wiccan and will have explored many avenues within what may be termed “the occult”. The *Wicca Revealed Course* gave you the basic framework of Wicca; the *Advanced Course* has given you a good general grounding in the chief arts of Witchery and most importantly has given you access to the Astral realms.

At the end of a course it is always important to review what you have learnt and assess its value to you.

What things resonated with you? What things frankly left you cold and bored? Take some time over the month to carefully review each unit of work. This is not an idle exercise for it will inform the choices that you make next.

Having come so far, the purpose of any magical work or learning will be obvious to you now. It is not about power, not about great knowledge and skill with which to impress others. It is purely and simply to serve. For some it is to serve the Divine by forming an ever increasing tie with Spirit, for others it is about helping other entities to grow and be all that they can be, whilst some combine both goals. This is stated easily enough, but not everyone who comes so far along

the path of learning is truly up to the challenge; yet, on the other hand, there will be others who have had this ability all along and lived their lives accordingly.

You will hopefully have noticed throughout this course that most of the lessons have been written about skills that are only of any real use if applied to others. Divination, astrology, herbs, ceremonies to mark the stages of life, crystal craft and psychic powers are all helpful to the individual but the real joy in their use is when they are put into service for the benefit of others.

Now, no-one is suggesting at this point that you necessarily go out into the world in deliberate search of needy souls or that you strive to aid everyone you meet. For most this would be exhausting and in any case most Witches prefer not to work in such a showy way. The application of these skills need not be on a grand scale. It may be that you use them to help your family, a close friend or a work colleague. If that is the use they are put to then that is fine use indeed.

Not everything in the course though was about helping others. There was also much in the way of personal spiritual development. Lessons on the Kabbalah and Travelling on the Planes were very much designed to give you the tools to become closer to Spirit. Knowledge and conversation with one's Holy Guardian Angel or spirit guide was the goal of these teachings. Once this is achieved the whole of life takes on an almost unimaginable richness for it becomes apparent how all things are an expression of the Goddess and God and that all things are intimately interconnected in ways that would not have been so apparent before.

Another important part of the course was also one of the later research projects that asked you to explore those who seek to explain away many occult teachings and practices as somehow being fake. This can often be an earth shattering experience as alternative and well presented arguments against many of the treasured principles and acts of one's belief system are suddenly called into question. For some it will have meant a complete re-evaluation of their path in life and mean that they abandon Wicca and occult teachings for good. Others will listen to the views of others and ultimately emerge stronger in their faith; a few will quickly brush off alternatives as nonsense and carry on as they did before.

I would argue that the middle response is the best. It is good here to bear in mind the symbol of the Second Degree; it is an inverted pentagram where Spirit points down towards the ground. Like the Hanged Man card of the Tarot it is a pivotal state to be in, for one of the things it represents is the deepest descent of the Light. Part of achieving the level of this course is the deep questioning of one's beliefs, with a view to rising stronger once the process has been completed. Of course, many will not genuinely achieve this and only you can honestly say if you have.

Having taken stock of one's learning and new found abilities on this course it then becomes legitimate to ask where next?

A Rite of Passage

As I have stated before, this work was designed to make you a generalist. There will likely be one or two avenues of study that you wish to pursue to higher levels. Some of you may have been fascinated by the whole curriculum, that is fine but it should always be remembered that power lies in concentrated efforts. Choronzon, the great demon of dispersion, even now is waiting to see what your next move will be. Will you attempt to study all these fascinating areas that have been opened up at once or will you more judiciously decide to spend your time looking at one thing in depth?

Witchcraft should not be hurried, as indeed should no other areas of the occult. You have your whole life ahead of you with which to develop yourself further. This should be a joyous realisation. You are the one in control of your own destiny, you are the one making the choices and you are subject to no-one but yourself. You are of the Spirit and Spirit has no higher authority.

At the moment Magicka School does not offer a course designed to take you further (although it may do so at a later date). There is no guided support from Magicka from this point on and you are now on your own. However, I would like to outline a few areas for your consideration of things that you might like to do next. Whether you follow the suggestions or not is, of course, up to you.

Solitaires can follow the path of First and Second Degree Witches up to a point. After all, most of the main rites and rituals can easily be adapted to solitary practice and nearly all the skills can be changed to suit as well. However, pursuing the equivalent of a Third Degree Path, in many Wiccan's view, is something entirely different. It requires working alongside others and indeed many of the skills that a Third Degree Witch learns are to do with working with people. Someone who pursues a Third Degree path is a repository of knowledge and ability. As I have stated already, a lot of the value of occult things lies in how they are used to help serve others. Unshared they benefit only you and, although there is nothing wrong with this *per se*, it is not, in my view at least, what the Third Degree is about [1].

So, as you begin to assess the value of *Wicca Revealed* and *Wicca Advanced*, think very carefully about whether you want to serve others and how you might like to go about doing this.

The following are nothing more than suggestions:

Rites

You know enough now to begin to go out in the world and offer your services as a leader of rites, such as performing a Wiccaning, Handfasting or funeral service. If deciding to do this it should be very carefully thought out and planned. One of the first things you have to ask yourself is if you are legally qualified to do this in your part of the world. In some countries and states you will be allowed to conduct such ceremonies without a great deal of certification. In others you will

be asked to fill in many forms and jump through all manner of legalistic hoops. This is not to put anyone off. Indeed, if you are put off by the thought of finding out, and then acting on what you find, then this suggestion is not for you.

Having established this, one of your next moves is an honest appraisal of the kinds of social and organisational skills you have. Are you up to leading and helping to manage an important event for others? If not, do you feel you have the capacity to learn such skills? Many Wiccans take public speaking courses, take up acting in community theatre, or NLP classes, partly with the idea of overcoming limitations. Others will, of course, have much experience of organising these kinds of events from the work they have been doing for years and find the skills they already have are easily transferred.

Skills

Similarly, setting yourself up so that you can use a chosen skill to aid others requires thought along the same kinds of lines. At the end of *Wicca Revealed*, I invited you to think of practical ways to help others. After having completed this course you now have an added range of skills upon which to draw. Whether you wish to divine, use herbs, reiki or crystals to heal, or your psychic powers to help law enforcers, you first need to assess what skills you have and what skills you need to develop. If this sounds like so much glib advice I make no apology; many who would use what they have to serve others often forget to ask themselves the most basic of questions, and it is then little wonder that they meet with limited success in their chosen trade. Throughout, the lessons have given much insight into the nuts and bolts everyday practicalities of these skills and it is a good idea to build on this advice.

Self Development

Alongside using your abilities to help others you will also likely want to make sure that you have sufficient time to develop yourself. A chosen area of study should be explored in real depth until you become proficient and then adept at it. Much more than this though, you are now in a real position to develop your spiritual nature to a fine degree. This is a lifetime's, and often several lifetimes', work. There is no hurry, for as you will have been experiencing, you are immortal. How you go about this is up to you and many of you will now have your Holy Guardian Angel or Spirit to guide you. Many covens training Third Degree Witches often use an adaptation of Golden Dawn practice to know and become one with the Divine, as I have at many points in my courses. It is possible, and ultimately necessary, to pursue this course of action alone, although there are many groups out there who can help.

Green Witch

Alongside progressing spiritually, it is the nature of a Witch never to forget Mother Nature and just as at the end of the first Wicca course, I would like to invite you now to think of further ways you can benefit the planet. Last time though it was with an emphasis on what you could do individually. This time I would like you to think about what you can do to help motivate others to take the cause of Gaia seriously. With the ice caps melting and the beginnings of altered weather patterns in evidence all around the globe this is a pressing matter that all Wiccans should be keen to push others to do more. This need not be done in a religious way, you need not mention you are Pagan to anyone, but the benefit of a Wiccan world view and the need to encourage others to live in as much harmony as possible with the planet should be obvious.

Setting Up and Running a Coven

Now that you are very nearly at the end of the equivalent of a Second Degree I have judged it the right time to suggest that you begin to give some thought to starting a coven. A number of Wiccan purists will no doubt be up in arms about this and give all kinds of dire warnings that only Third Degree Witches have any business considering such a thing. It is perfectly true to say that many covens only allow a member to hive off and form their own, after they have satisfactorily completed whatever a coven has decided is their Third Degree syllabus.

But, this is only one arrangement among many. Some coven systems do not have a Degree system at all, others hastily arrange a quick Third Degree ceremony straight after a Second Degree has been completed and some allow Second Degree Witches to go off and do their own thing [2].

As usual, there are no hard and fast rules.

Perhaps at this point I should state my own particular take on things. Having followed courses at Magicka you are now in possession of a wide range of Wiccan and magical skills and knowledge. There is still much to learn, but there will always be more in-depth study even after you have been practicing for decades.

If you wish, you could at this point go off and form your own coven. Certainly you know enough about the Craft to go and do this. However, I do not suggest that you take the plunge just yet. Running a successful coven takes many personal skills that you should ideally be sure that you have before embarking on such a venture and I list a few of the things you may wish to think about below:

Who Will Lead?

There will be some who take exception to the notion that covens are led. After all witches are autonomous and take orders from no-one. However, any successful group has those who set its direction, it may be that this is done by one or two

individuals or that true democracy reigns where everyone is part of the decision making process.

Many would-be covens stumble at this first hurdle over who should lead and how. The answer can be far from obvious. You may be setting up a coven with members who have had no experience of leading within Wicca or under any other circumstances. Will there be a High Priest and Priestess? Will there be just one person? Will everyone have as much say as each other? Should it be those with the most knowledge, those with the most charisma or the greatest creativity? Should it be decided by a vote or by sheer force of personality? Should it be decided because everyone else has simply acquiesced and said words to the effect of “no, you do it”? What happens if you have several who want the role of coven leader?

There are no easy answers to any of these questions. Wicca isn't a centrally run organisation with an ordered hierarchy from a Queen of the Witches down. There are no generally agreed “best practices” to follow and each coven must find its own answer.

Make sure though, that whatever you decide, that everyone is able to agree to it – the last thing you need at the start is dissenting voices or those who feel disgruntled.

A Coven Takes Organisation

One of the first things that you will need to think about are practicalities. Who will you be forming a coven with and how large do you want your coven to be? I would recommend starting small, just three members is fine as a beginning and will give you the chance to see if this kind of thing really is for you.

Once you are decided on size you then need to consider a regular venue and make sure that whether indoors or outdoors it will be private enough and suit your needs.

Having done this it is then a good idea to begin to discuss with any prospective partners in this venture the aims of the group. The possibilities are, of course, endless. However, you will do well to think about overall philosophies and practices. Will the coven be eclectic or follow a tradition? What kinds of worship and magic will be involved? What training will take place and what new vistas will be explored?

These things are easy enough to decide when you are solitary, but establishing them in a way that satisfies the needs of others is much trickier and time consuming. I believe it is always a good idea to try to decide some general directions at the start, these can then be altered later, but at least a path has been decided upon. Others, though, will be content to let such things develop as they go along. This may well suit a small coven of witches who know each other well, but for those who are working with individuals they don't have such close ties with then it may be best to define parameters early on. These should be written

down and I would even go as far to say that regular minuted administrative meetings can also be a good idea. Many, many covens fall apart and descend into arguments when its members can't agree on what was decided and when –you would be surprised how often this can happen and yet an A4 (8 ½ x 11”) folder with a record of group decisions in is all it takes to prevent this from happening.

Having thought about this there is the task of making sure that a coven diary is kept. This ensures that everyone is clear when the coven will meet, at what time and what it is meeting for. This sounds beautifully simple, doesn't it? You set a time to meet and everyone turns up prepared for the ceremony or magical working that everyone agreed on. In practice, though, things are rarely this easy. With the best will in the world people have conflicting familial and work commitments. People forget, don't turn up on time, and come prepared for the wrong thing and so on. This is one reason for keeping numbers small to start with.

Whoever is in charge of the diary also needs to be someone who can be relied upon to give tactful reminders to members that they need to turn up and what it is they are coming for.

On top of this there may also be financial considerations. Will the coven be investing in some group equipment for rituals or books for a library for example? And who will be paying for the wine, cakes, and the reminder phone calls and so on?

All of this sounds terribly mundane and boring. But it is a fact that the longest lasting and most enjoyed covens are usually the ones that are best organised. Think of it a bit like a club that needs a secretary or small committee to keep things moving along smoothly.

A Coven Requires Creativity Management

Whatever system of leadership you have decided on, and no matter how well organised your gatherings are, the one thing all covens need is creativity. The ability to recognise it, foster and nurture it is also equally as important. The Craft thrives on those who can bring imagination to rituals and rites, whether this be in the form of words, props, music, visual arts or dance. Creativity is the life blood of Wicca, far more so than many other religions; it is absolutely central to celebration of the Goddess and God and the working of magic and its form is not dictated by any higher authority.

Managing this important aspect of the Craft is critical. All groups of people have their own gift and talents and it is vital to ensure that these are evenly used within the coven. This again is not as easy as might at first appear. Covens can easily become showcases for an individual's talent; this may be great for the person concerned as they bask in the praise of their peers. However, it doesn't take much before (human nature being what it is) petty jealousies arise and an air of competition creeps into the proceedings as one member seeks to out do another.

One way of helping to keep the peace is to make sure that creative responsibilities are divided among the group in agreement with everyone and that all stick to the areas they have agreed to for a defined period of time. At a later date these can be reviewed and changed as the coven sees fit.

Marking the End of the Course

A Quick Note to Solitary Students

If you have thrown yourself whole heartedly behind this course and carried out the research projects and exercises you should be justifiably proud of your achievements. It may interest you to know that there are many covens out there who have used the course as a basis for their Second Degree work. Of course, many of these have not just used our materials verbatim. They have adapted it to suit their needs, disagreed with portions of it, expanded on some areas, ignored others and added in things that I have not included. But the fact that many covens have used the course as a basis for training shows you that what you have undertaken is real and valid.

Hopefully, by now there should be no doubts in your mind that what you have been learning has been in any way inferior to what is offered in a coven setting. It has been different because you have been working as a solitary, but the ground you have covered has been much the same as many covens will offer. All this is a round about way of saying that you should not let anyone tell you that because you learnt the Craft On-line that you are somehow an inferior Witch. You have not been engaged in a McWicca course and, unless you chose not to take the course exercises and research projects seriously, you have not become a McWiccan [3].

Ceremonial Suggestion

Before beginning the following ceremony many Wiccans will spend some time preparing themselves for this event. Some might take themselves to a special place to meditate; others will perform a ritual bath, some fast and so on. What you do exactly is up to you, but this is a momentous occasion and you should do something that will put you in the right frame of mind and reflect the dignity of this rite of passage.

Some Witches like to have a brand new set of working tools to add to the sense that a new period is about to begin. This will likely be expensive and a cheaper option is to make a new tool such as a wand or even athame. It is also common practice for a Witch to take another name at this point in their development. Although you can also keep your old name if you wish, it should be borne in mind that this is one way of emphasising that you have reached a new

level of experience and are not the same as you were before. Again what name you take is entirely up to you.

Different traditions word their ceremony of the Second Degree in various ways. I have followed a broadly Gardnerian pattern (albeit adapted for solitary practice) those that wish to consult the original should visit <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/gbos/gbos04.htm>.

The circle is set up as usual. There should be a bell, scourge and a decanter of olive oil on the altar, working tools should also be placed beside them.

Stand in front of the altar in the East [4] and proclaim:

"Hear, ye Mighty Ones, I, _____(your old Witch name), a duly consecrated Priestess and Witch, am now properly prepared to be made a High Priest/ess" [5].

Repeat this statement to the rest of the Four Quarters using the appropriate Archangelic names, starting with the South and proceeding to the North.

Circumambulate the circle three times and then kneel before the altar in the East. Say:

"I am ready now to be purified and take a great oath."

Strike the bell on the altar three times. Gently scourge [6] the back three, seven, nine, and twenty-one times. Say:

"I now give myself the new name of _____. I, _____, swear upon the great Goddess and God (Goddess and God names can be substituted here) and by the Elemental forces of Fire, Water, Air and Earth, to love, worship and honour the Divine in its many aspects; to always be true to the Craft; to never abuse it or my powers; and to keep this promise forever in my being [7]. This I swear by my hopes of salvation, my past lives, and my hopes of future ones to come, and I devote myself to utter destruction if I break this my solemn oath."

Next take the olive oil from the altar and make the sign of the Goddess on your forehead and the sign of the God on your forearms. Concentrate on what these symbols mean.

Say:

"I hereby consecrate myself with the following Magic Sign."

With salt water anoint your womb or penis tip, right breast, left hip, right hip, left breast, and womb (or penis tip) again, to trace a downwards pointing pentagram.

Now say:

"I now consecrate myself with wine."

Repeat the pentagram traced above.

Rise in front of the altar and say:

"I now rise a consecrated High Priest/ess set upon a higher course and the attainment of new goals and horizons. With my working tools I do scribe the Magic Circle for the first time on this path."

Kiss the athame/wand [8] and present it to the Four Quarters and Archangels beginning in the East.

Next, kiss the chalice and present it to the Four Quarters and Archangels again beginning in the East.

Repeat this with the athame/wand and the Pentacle.

Finally proclaim:

"Hear ye great Lady and Lord of Life and of Death! Here ye the Archangelic powers of Fire, Water, Air and Earth! Within this circle, at my hands and through my will, I, _____, have been properly pledged and anointed a High Priest/ess."

Research Project

Coven Preliminaries

Assuming you are interested in setting up a coven of your own at some point in the future, now is a good time to reflect on how you may wish to go about doing this. I take quite an organised viewpoint and believe that thinking about some important areas before diving in head first is probably best, if only because it helps you get in your mind what it is that you want as well as how best to express it. I recognise that this approach doesn't suit everyone and some people are quite happy to let things evolve when they are in the thick of things. As always, do what feels right to you. However, for those who want, I have given some pointers below of things that you may wish to consider

Who are the other individuals who might be interested in taking part in this venture with you? Have you sounded them out yet? If you haven't, why not put a time in your diary when you will?

Have you thought of the areas you might want to discuss with them?

What might be the purposes of the coven?

Where would make a suitable meeting place?

How do you envision it being run or led?

What are the common philosophies and beliefs between the prospective members?

If there were any conflicting ideas how might these be resolved?

How formal do you want the constitution of the coven to be? Some covens are run like societies (especially some of the larger and well established ones) and have a detailed written constitution explaining the rights and responsibilities of all members, others have no such structure at all and many are somewhere in between, with a few written guidelines. All can be made to work and there are some successful examples of each type. How do you wish yours to be set up?

Even for those who feel they never wish to belong to a coven these things are still worth thinking about as it will give you an insight into the kinds of things many other witches have to consider outside of their rituals, rites and magical workings.

End Blessing

You have done it!! You have actually completed the *Wicca Advanced Course* in its entirety. If you look back in your magical records over the last couple of years you will find that you have indeed come a long way and will find that your life has changed in all sorts of ways.

Beware of one thing though; the end of an intensive period of magical work can be a strange one. Particularly the end of a course where there are no higher level lessons to pursue. You may well find that there will be a time when you feel a little lost and directionless. You may also feel oddly tired and lacking enthusiasm for anything Wiccan or magical for some time. If this is the case then please do not worry unduly. You have worked hard and your Spirit, mind and body may well need a complete break.

If this is the case then don't resist it. Have all the break that you need. You are under no obligation to feel that you must press on. Often, after having taken a Second Degree, coven Witches suddenly find that they have had enough and this is no different for solitaries who have been engaged on a Second Degree style course.

If you need to go away and do something different for a few months or even a whole year, you have no need to feel guilty and should just do it. You will find that such a rest will pay huge dividends in the future; one's spirit has a way of bouncing back with twice the potency when it has had a chance to relax.

I sincerely hope that your time spent on this course has been beneficial and would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy and prosperous magical life.

In Love and Light,

Blessed Be,

Pino Longchild

Notes

[1] As you progress you will find many definitions of what constitutes Third Degree Wicca.

[2] Some traditionalists will be up in arms about this. The fact is, though, that there are a number of examples of well respected and well known traditions where founders set up their own covens without first belonging to another. And, in any case, the first Witch was by definition a solitary who must have set up their own group.

[3] This rather unpleasant phrase is a derogatory term used to describe Witches who have been trained primarily at Internet sites that allow their students to move through their First Degree style courses in a matter of days or weeks and compares this haste with a certain fast food company. I prefer to pass no judgement on the quality of this training other than to observe that, as with any course, what you put in is what you will get out.

[4] Bear in mind here that the directions Magicka uses are its own and that others put their altars elsewhere, most often in the North.

[5] The Gardnerian original uses the terms “High Priestess” and “Witch Queen”. They are frequently adapted as not all traditions or covens hold that taking the Second Degree makes one a High Priestess and many dislike the term “Witch Queen” as they feel it smacks of hierarchy. The term “High Priest/ess” rather suggests that a Witch is now able to assume the duties of a coven leader, although in practice many will not form their own coven until the Third Degree has been conferred. I would put forward the viewpoint that one is now ready to assume High Priest/ess duties, sharing them with the original High Priest/ess of a coven, but that one is not ready to form a coven of their own until the Third Degree has been passed. As has already been noted elsewhere on the courses, the time and training undertaken between Second and Third Degree varies widely within Wicca and there are many famous, high profile Witches (both now and in the past) who have had very short periods as Second Degree Witches.

[6] The emphasis is on “gently”. Not every Witch will use a scourge and with a little imagination this part of the ceremony is easily substituted with something else.

[7] The Gardnerian oath is 'I, (name), swear, upon my mother's womb and by mine honour among men and my brothers and sisters of the Art, that I will never reveal to any at all any of the secrets of the Art, except it be to a worthy person, properly prepared, in the centre of a Magic Circle such as I am now in. This I swear by my hopes of salvation, my past lives and my hopes of future ones to come and I devote myself and my measure to utter destruction if I break this my solemn Oath.' This has become more or less redundant as there is now so much readily available in the public domain.

[8] Your choice will depend on which you regard as a tool of Fire and which you regard as Air. The idea here is to represent all four of the Elements.

Reading List

Divination

Tarot

Paul Foster Case, *The Tarot*, BOTA, 1990. Case's book is one of the greatest Tarot books ever written. Many more modern authors are indebted to his writings including Rachel Pollack, Eden Gray and Amber Jayanti. Although the book only deals with the Major Arcana, the solid Kabbalistic insights he gives are invaluable.

Amber Jayanti, *Living the Tarot*, Wordsworth, 2000. Less famous than Pollack's book, but just as good.

Magicka School, *Basic and Advanced On-line Tarot Courses*: If you haven't already done so, now is a great time to access the comprehensive Tarot courses.

Rachel Pollack, *Seventy Eight Degrees of Wisdom: A Book of Tarot*, Element, 1997. Seminal modern work on the Tarot.

Palmistry

Lori Reid, *The Complete Book of the Hand: A Modern Approach to Hand Analysis*, Pan, 1991. A serious and well written work detailing all aspects of Palmistry. This book is currently out of print but see also *The Art of Hand Reading*, DK Publishing, 1999.

Cheiro, *You and Your Hand: The Secrets of Palmistry Revealed*, Sphere, 1979, revised by Louise Owen. Cheiro was the foremost practitioner of Palmistry in the nineteenth century and today's modern continuation of its practice is nearly entirely because of his influence. For those of you with an historical interest in occult matters this book will be a goldmine. See the palms of the great British Prime Minister Gladstone, Lord Kitchener and the famous female spy Mata-Hari. This book is currently out of print but see also Cheiro's *Language of the Hand*, Hind Pocket Books PVT Ltd, 2003.

Runes

Edred Thorsson, *The Runecaster's Handbook: The Well of Wyrd*, Red Wheel/Weiser, 1999. This work shows how to make and empower runes, as well as how to successfully create the setting of a rune reading. Advice is also given about making the necessary psychological and spiritual preparations for casting the runes.

I Ching

R. Wilhem ed., C. F. Baynes trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, Arkana, 1989. With a useful foreword by C.G. Jung this is widely acknowledged as the best translation into English of this Chinese classic.

Rites of Passage

Janet and Stewart Farrar, *A Witches' Bible*, Phoenix Publishing Inc, 1996. This book contains a Wiccaning, a Handfasting and a Requiem. They are all written beautifully and with a lot of practical hints. However, they will likely appeal most to Gardnerian and Alexandrian Witches who belong to a coven run on traditional lines. There is also a whole chapter devoted to reincarnation.

Raymond Buckland, *Complete Book of Witchcraft*, Llewellyn, 2003. Buckland also includes ceremonies for a Wiccaning, a Handfasting and a funeral rite based on his brand of Seax-Wicca.

Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, Oxford University Press, 1999. This work has many valuable things to say about Wiccan views of reincarnation as well as sections on important ceremonies.

Walter de la Mare, *Come Hither*. This is one of the most beautiful anthologies of poetry ever created. Currently it is out of print but copies can be obtained relatively easy on-line. It exists either in a one or two volume edition. Highly recommended.

Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes eds., *The Rattle Bag*, Faber and Faber, 2005. A fantastic one volume anthology.

Rene Graziani ed., *The Naked Astronaut, Poems on Birth and Birthdays*, Faber and Faber, 1983.

Starhaw, *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying*, Harper San Francisco, 1997

Ian Stevenson, M.D., *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*, American Society for Psychical Research, 1966.

Herbs

Nicolas Culpepper, *Complete Herbal and English Physician*, RA Kessinger Company, 2003. This is perhaps the first and foremost herbal in the English language. Please note that this is a very old book from the C17th and **some of the remedies Culpeper prescribes would not be used by modern herbalists.**

Scott Cunningham, *Magical Herbalism*, Llewellyn, 1985. Highly regarded magical herbal. The book deals only with the magical and ritual uses of herbs and does not contain medicinal information.

M. Grieve, *A Modern Herbal, Volumes 1 and 2*, Non basic Stock Line, 1971. Originally published in the 1930s this is one of the best herbals around. Unfortunately it is currently out of print (April 2006), see however the internet resources below as the entire work is available on-line for free.

Nicola Peterson, illustrated by Rosamund Gendle, *Herbs and Health*, Bloomsbury Books, 1989. This is one of the more accessible herbals, full of medicinal uses.

Internet Resources

One of the best On-line sources for herbs is

<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/mgmh.html> which is a hypertext version of *A Modern Herbal* by Mrs M.Grieve, first published in 1931. Some of the information may not now be in agreement with modern medicine but it is nonetheless amongst the most complete herbals ever written.

A free On-line version of Culpeper's herbal can be found at <http://www.bibliomania.com/2/1/66/113/frameset.html>.

Magic

Annie Besant et al, *Thought Forms*, Kessinger, 2003.

Paul Coelho, *The Alchemist*, Harper Collins, 2002. Well worth reading for a variety of reasons, and Coelho has some very interesting things to say about divination, see especially pp.107-8.

Aleister Crowley, Israel Regardie ed. *777 and other Qabalistic Writings*, Weiser, 1986. This is an excellent compendium of correspondences widely used in Wicca as a basis for the art of magic. It should be noted though that a number of ideas are Crowley's own.

Dion Fortune, *Applied Magic*, Weiser, 2000. A useful introduction to this work is given by well-known occult author Gareth Knight.

Dion Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah*, 1998, SIL Trading Ltd. Dion Fortune is one of the greatest occult writers on the Kabbalah and much of her esoteric thinking has been incorporated into Wicca.

Dion Fortune, *The Cosmic Doctrine*, Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003.

C. G. Jung, ed., *Man and his Symbols*, Picador, 1989. No Witch, or indeed anyone with an interest in the occult, can afford not to read this work that was deliberately intended to explain Jung's most important ideas to non-academics.

C.W. Leadbeater, *Man, Visible And Invisible*, Quest Books, 2000

Eliphas Levi, trans A.E. Waite, *Transcendental Magic, Its Doctrine and Ritual*, Bracken Books 1995. The whole structure of Levi's book is Tarot based Kabbalistic, when re-read in this light the book takes on whole new layers of meaning that at first sight are often completely missed.

S. L. MacGregor Mathers trans, *The Key of Solomon the King (Clavicula Salomonis)*, Weiser, 1990. When looked at Kabbalistically, this is another important occult text that takes on new layers of meaning.

Israel Regardie, *The Original Account of the Teachings, Rites and Ceremonies of the Hermetic Order of The Golden Dawn*, sixth edition, Llewellyn, 2003. Perhaps rather

oddly few Witches have this book on their shelves. It is an absolute treasure trove of all manner of magical practices, many of which have been a direct influence on Wicca.

Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*, Llewellyn, 2003. For those who are interested in travelling up the Tree this book is an essential item. It clearly lays out how the Kabbalah can be used as a pathway to the Divine.

Israel Regardie, *The Tree of Life, edited and annotated by Chic and Sandra Tabatha Cicero*, Llewellyn, 2003. Widely considered the best overall survey of magic in print and most importantly the work is firmly based on the Kabbalah.

Rudolf Steiner et al, *How to Know Higher Worlds*, Steiner Books, 1999.

Astrology

Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Donald Tyson, Ed., *Three Book of Occult Philosophy*, Llewellyn, 2004. An unedited version of the text may be found On-line at <http://www.esotericarchives.com/agrippa/index.html>

N. Henbest, *The Night Sky*, Usborne New Spotter's Guide, Usborne Publishing Ltd, 2000. An excellent cheap pocket guide to the stars and planets.

Margaret E. Hone D. F. Astrol. S., *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, Revised Edition, C.W. Daniel & Co, 1978.

S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, *The Key of Solomon the King*, Weiser, 1974. An On-line version is available here: <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/ksol.htm>

Neil F. Michelson, *The American Ephemeris for the 20th Century 1900-2000*, Astro Communications Services, April 1994. See also Neil F. Michelson and Rique Pottenger, *The American Ephemeris for the 21st Century, 2000-2050*, ACS Publications, 1997. Although all times are based on Universal Time it should be noted that this is for all practical purposes the same as GMT. Alternatively Raphael's Astronomical Ephemeris can be used for the year in question.

Julia and Derek Parker, *Parker's Astrology, the definitive guide to using Astrology in every aspect of your life*, DK, 2005.

Raphael's Astronomical Ephemeris of the Planets' Places, available for any given year and location, W Foulsham & Co Ltd.

Raphael's Table of Houses, published for various latitudes, W. Foulsham & Co Ltd, no date given. There are many varieties of Tables of Houses for sale, if you wish to use the Equal House System make sure yours follows that system.

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Psychic Powers

Stephen E. Braude, *The Limits of Influence: Psychokinesis and the Philosophy of Science*, University Press of America, 1997. Excellent scholarly work looking at Psychokinesis and its limits in a scientific context.

James Randi, *James Randi: Psychic Investigator*, Boxtree, 1991. An excellent plain speaking critical work of a whole number of psychic skills. Highly recommended as you will find some of your cherished beliefs strongly and cogently questioned. I would recommend it have a place on every Witch's bookshelf.

Dean Radin, *The Conscious Universe*, HarperCollins, 1997. An excellent scientific look at psychic phenomena. It is also well worth taking a look at Radin's website: <http://www.deanradin.com/NewWeb/deanradin.html>

Pete A Sanders, *You Are Psychic: the Free Soul Method*, Prentice Hall & IBD, 1999. This highly interesting book takes a scientific approach to teaching its reader how to develop psychic skills. Some of the information about psychically sensitive areas of the body will likely be surprising.

David Wells, *Complete Guide to Developing Your Psychic Skills*, Hay House, 2006. A standard work about developing psychic skills.

Crystals

Faber Birren, *Color Psychology and Color Therapy: A Factual Study of the Influence of Color on Human Life*, Kessinger, 2006

Roger C. Croxon, *Teach Yourself Crystal Healing*, Teach Yourself Books, 2003.

Theo Gimbel, *The Healing Energies of Colour*, Gaia Books Ltd, 2005.

Judy Hall, *The Crystal Bible: A Definitive Guide to Crystals*, Godsfield Press Ltd, 2003.

Simon and Sue Lilly, *The Essential Crystal Handbook: All the Crystals You Will Ever Need for Health, Healing and Happiness*, Duncan Baird Publishers, 2006.

June McLeod, *Colours of the Soul: Transform Your Life Through Colour Therapy*, O Books, 2006

Angela Wright, *The Beginner's Guide to Colour Psychology*, Colour Affects Ltd, 1998.

Sex and the Great Rite

The Gardnerian Book of Shadows, compiled by Aidan A. Kelly available for free at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/gbos/gbos01.htm> makes an interesting place to start any exploration of the Great Rite as it provides the earliest published mention of this important aspect of Wicca. Kelley's compilation is pieced together from a variety of versions which is always made clear in the text.

Janet and Stewart Farrar, *A Witches' Bible*, Hale, 2002. To my knowledge the Farrars were the first to publish the first full workable ceremony of the Great Rite. They borrowed heavily from Gardner's Book of Shadows to construct it.

Second Degree

The Gardnerian Book of Shadows, compiled by Aidan A. Kelly available for free at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/gbos/gbos01.htm> makes an interesting place to start any exploration of the Degree ceremonies. Kelley's compilation is pieced together from a variety of versions which is always made clear in the text.

Janet and Stewart Farrar, *A Witches' Bible*, Hale, 2002. The Farrars present a useful Second Degree ceremony that makes a great starting place for creating your own.